

Boer Tales

Traditional Afrikaaner

Bush Tales

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Why Old Baboon has that Kink in his Tail

The day was hot, and the koppies simmered blue and brown along the Vaal River. Noon had come, dinner was done. “Allah Mattie!” said the grey old kitchen boy to himself, as he stretched to sleep in the shade of the mimosa behind the house. “Allah Mattie! but it near break my back in dem tobacco lands dis mawnin’. I sleep now.”

He stretched himself with a slow groan of pleasure, settling his face upon his hands as he lay, soaking in comfort. In three minutes he was asleep.

But round the corner of the house came the three children, the eldest a ten-year-old, the youngest six. With a whoop and a dash the eldest flung himself astride the old Hottentot’s back, the youngest rode the legs behind, while the girl, the eight-year-old with the yellow hair and the blue eyes, darted to the old man’s head and caught him fast with both hands. “Ou’ Ta’! Ou’ Ta’!” she cried. “Now you’re Ou’ Jackalse and we’re Ou’ Wolf, and we’ve got you this time at last.” She wanted to dance in the triumph of it, could she have done it without letting go.

Old Hendrik woke between a grunt and a groan, but the merry clamour of the little girl would have none of that. “Now we’ve got you, Ou’ Jackalse,” cried she again.

The old man’s yellow face looked up in a sly grin. “Ah, Anniekye,” said he unctuously; “but

Ou' Wolf never did ketch Ou' Jackalse. He ain't never bin slim enough yet. He make a big ole try dat time when he got Oom Baviyàan to help him; but all dey got was dat kink in Ou' Baviyàan's tail—you can see it yet.”

“But how did old Bobbyjohn get that kink in his tail? You never told us that, Ou' Ta' ,” protested Annie.

The old Hottentot smiled to the little girl, and then straightway sighed to himself. “If you little folks only knowed de Taal,” said he plaintively. “It don't soun' de same in you' Englis' somehow.” He shook his head sadly over English as the language for a Hottentot story handed down in the Boer tongue. He had been long enough in the service of this “English” family (an American father and Australian mother) to know enough of the language for bald use; though, being a Hottentot, he had never mastered the “th,” as a Basuto or other Bantu might have done, and was otherwise uncertain also—the pronunciation of a word often depending upon that of the words next before and after it. But English was not fond enough, nor had diminutives enough, for a kitchen tale as a house Kaffir loves to tell it.

None the less, his eyes brightened till the smile danced in his face as his words began. “Ou' Wolf—well, Ou' Wolf, he'd a seen a lot less trouble if he ha'n't had sich a wife, for Ou' Missis Wolf she yust had a temper like a meer-cat. Folks use' to won'er how Ou' Wolf manage' wid her, an' Ou' Jackalse use' to say to him, ‘Allah man! if she was on'y my wife for about five

minutes she'd fin' out enough to tink on as long's she keep a-livin'.' An' den Ou' Jackalse, he'd hit 'is hat back on to de back of his head an' he'd step slouchin' an' fair snort agen a-grinnin'.

"But Ou' Wolf ud look behind to see if his missis was hearin', an' den he'd shake his head, an' stick his hands in his pockets an' walk off an tink. He'd see some mighty tall tinkin' yust up over his head, but he couldn' somehow seem to get a-hold of it.

"Well, one mawnin' Missis Wolf she get up, an' she look on de hooks an' dere ain't no meat, an' she look in de pot an' dere ain't no mealies. 'Allah Crachty!' says she, 'but dat Ou' Wolf is about de laziest skellum ever any woman wore herse'f out wid. I'll ketch my deat' of him afore I's done.'

"Den she look outside, an' dere she seen Ou' Wolf a-settin' on de stoop in de sun. He was yust a-waitin', sort o' quiet an' patient, for his breakfas', never dreamin' nothin' about bein' banged about de yead wid a mealie ladle, when out flops Missis Wolf, an' fair bangs him a biff on one side his head wid de long spoon. 'You lazy skellum!' ses she, an' bash she lams him on his t'other year. 'Where's darie (that there) meat for de breakfas' I don' know?' ses she, an' whack she smack him right on top his head. 'Off you go an' fetch some dis ver' minute,' ses she, an' Ou' Wolf he don' say no moh, but he yust offs, an' he offs wid a yump too, I can tell you.

"Ou' Wolf as he go he won'er how he's goin' to get dat meat quick enough. 'I tink I'll get Ou' Jackalse to come along a-huntin' too,' ses he. 'He's mighty slim when he ain't no need to be,

an' p'raps if he'd be slim a-huntin' dis mawnin' we'd ketch somet'in' quicker.' An' Ou' Wolf rub his head in two-t'ree places as he tink of it.

“Now Ou' Jackalse, he was a-sittin' in de sun agen de wall of his house, a-won'erin' where he's gun' to get breakfas', 'cause he feel dat hungry an' yet he feel dat lazy dat he wish de grass was sheep so he could lie down to it. But grass ain't sheep till it's inside one, an' so Missis Jackalse, inside a-spankin' little Ainky, was a-won'erin' where she's gun' to get some breakfas' to stop it a-squallin'. 'I jüst wish you' daddy 'ud tink a bit oftener where I's gun' to get bones for you,' ses she.

“Little Ainky, she stop an' listen to dat, an' den she tink awhile, but she fin' she don't get no fatter on on'y talk about bones, an' fus' t'ing her mammy know she puts her two han's up to her eyes an' fair dives into squallin' agen.

“Missis Jackalse she ketches hold o' Ainky an' gives her such a shakin' till her eyes fly wide open. 'I's jüst about tired o' hearin' all dat row,' ses she. An' while Ainky's quiet considerin' dat, Missis Jackalse she hear Ou' Wolf come along outside, axin' her Ou' Baas ain't he comin' huntin' dis mawnin'? Den she hear Ou' Jackalse answer back, sort o' tired like. 'But I cahnt come. I's sick.'

“Den Ainky lets out a squall fit to split, an' her mammy she biffs her a bash dat s'prise her

quite quiet, before she stick her head out o de doh an' say, mighty tremblin' like—'I don't tink we got no meat fo' breakfas' at all, Ou' Man'.

“But Ou' Jackalse he ain't a troublin' hisse'f about no women's talk. He don't turn his 'ead nor not'in'. He yust hutch hisse'f closer to de wall to bake hisse'f some more, an' he say agen—'I tell you I's sick, an' I cahnt go huntin' dis mawnin', nohow'.

“Missis Jackalse she pop her head inside agen mighty quick at dat, an' Ou' Wolf he sling off down de spruit wid his back up. Ou' Jackalse he yust sit still in de sun an' watch him go, an' he ses to hisse'f ses he: 'Now dat's big ole luck fo' me. If he ha'n't a come along like dat I don' know but I'd a had to go an' ketch somet'in' myse'f, I'm dat 'ongry. But now it'll be all right when he come back wid some sort o' buck.'

“Den he turn his head to de doh. 'Frowickie,' ses he to his missis inside, soft an' chucklin', 'tell Ainky to stop dat squallin' an' bawlin'. Ou' Wolf's gone huntin', an' yust as sure as he come back we'll have all de breakfas' we want. Tell 'er if she don't stop anyhow I'll come inside to her.'

“Missis Jackalse she frown at Ainky. 'You hear dat now,' ses she, 'an' you better be quiet now 'less you want to have you' daddy come in to you.' An' Ainky she say, 'Well, will you le' me play wid your tail den?' An' her mammy she say, 'All right,' an' dey 'gun a-laughin' an' a-goin'

on in whispers. But Ou' Jackalse he yust sit an' keep on bakin' hisse'f in de sun by de wall.

“By'n'by here comes Ou' Wolf back agen, an' a big fat Eland on his back, an' de sweat yust a-drippin' off him. An' when he comes past de house he look up an' dere he see Ou' Jackalse yust a-settin' an' a-bakin', an' a-makin' slow marks in de dust wid his toes now an' agen, an' lookin' might comfy. An' Ou' Wolf he feel darie big fat Eland more bigger an heavier dan ever on his back, an he feel dat savage at Ou' Jackalse dat he had to look toder way, for fear he'd let out all his bad words Kerblob in one big splosh on darie Ou' Jackalse head. But Ou' Jackalse he say nawt'in'; he yust sit an' bake. But he tink inside hisse'f, an' his eye kind o' 'gun to shine behind in his head as he watch darie meat go past an' go on, an' he feel his mouf run all water.

“But he ha'n't watched dat breakfas' out o' sight, an' he ha'n't quite settle hisse'f yust how he's goin' to get his share, when up hops Klein Hahsie—what you call Little Hare.

“‘Mawnin’, Klein Hahsie,’ ses Ou' Jackalse, but yust so high an' mighty's he know how, 'cause little Hahsie he's de runner for Big Baas King Lion, an Ou' Jackalse he tink he'll show him dat oder folks ain't no chicken feed, too.

“‘Mawnin’, Ou' Jackalse,’ ses Little Hahsie, kind o' considerin' him slow out of his big shiny eyes. Den he make a grab at one of his own long years as if it tickle him, an' when he turn his face to look at de tip o' darie year he sort o' wunk at it, kind o' slow and solemn. ‘Darie ou' year

o' mine!' ses he to Ou' Jackalse.

“Den he sort o' remember what he come for, an' he speak out mighty quick. ‘You yust better get a wiggle on you mighty sudden,’ ses he. ‘Ou' King Lion he's a roarin' for darie Ou' Jackalse fit to tear up de bushes. “Where's darie Ou' Jackalse? If he don't get here mighty quick he'll know all about it,” roars he. “What's de use o' me makin' him my doctor if he ain't here when he's wanted? Dis claw I neah tore out killin' a Koodoo yeste'day—he'd better be yust lively now a-gittin' here to doctor dat. Fetch him!” roars he, an' here I am, an' I tell you you yust better git a move on you,’ ses Hahsie.

“Ou' Jackalse he tink, but he don't let on nawthin' but what he's yust so sick as to split. ‘I's dat bad I cahnt har'ly crawl,’ ses he—‘but you go 'long an' tell King Lion I's a-comin' as soon's ever I get some medicine mix’.’

“‘Well, I tol' you—you better be quicker'n blue lightnin' all de same,’ ses Hahsie, an' off he flicks, as if he's sort o' considerin' what's de matter wid Ou' Jackalse.

“Well, Ou' Jackalse he tink, an' he tink, an' he know he'd better be gettin' along to King Lion, but yet he ain't a-goin' to give in about darie breakfas'. He ain't a-movin' mighty fast about it, but he goes into de woods an' he gets some leaves off o' one bush, an' some roots off'n anoder, an' yust when he tink dat's about all he want, who should he see but Ou' Wolf, kind o'

saunterin' along an' lookin' yust good an' full o' breakfas', an' chock full o' feelin' fine all inside him.

“Dat stir Ou' Jackalse where he's so empty in his tummy, an' dat make it strike him what to do. He comes along to Ou' Wolf lookin' like he's in a desprit rush an' yust in de worst kind of a tight place. ‘Here, Ou' Wolf,’ ses he in a hustle, ‘you's yust him I was tinkin' on. Hyer's King Lion about half crazy wid a pain, an' he's roarin' for me, an' I set off wid a yump, an' I got all de stuff for de medicine, but all de time I clean forgot de book to mix it by. Now you yust do me a good turn, like a good chap, an' you rush off to King Lion wid dis hyer medicine, while I streaks back for de book. You does dis foh me an' I ain't a-goin' to fo'get what I owe you for it.’

“Ou' Wolf he's quite took off his feet an' out o' breaf on it all. ‘Why, o' course,’ ses he. ‘You gi' me darie medicine an' I offs right away. A good yob I had breakfas' a'ready,’ an' he fair seizes darie medicine an' he offs.

“Ou' Jackalse lie right down where he's standin' an' he fair roll an' kick hisse'f wid laughin'. ‘A good yob I ar'n't had my breakfas',’ ses he. ‘I'd a lost a deal more'n meat if I had a done,’ ses he agen, an' den he ups an' he offs back to Ou' Wolf's house.

“All de way back he kep' on a-smilin' to hisse'f, an' every once in a while he'd give a skip an' a

dance to tink what a high ole time he was a-havin'. Den by'n'by he picks up a piece o' paper. 'Yust de t'ing I's wantin', ' ses he.

“Well, he come to Ou' Wolf's house an dere was Missis Wolf a-sittin' out on de stoop an' a pullin' down de flaps of her cappie to keep de flies off'n her nose. 'Mawnin', Cousin,' ses Ou' Jackalse; fair as polite as honey wouldn't run down his t'roat if you let him hold it in his mouf.

“'Mawnin', ' ses she, an' she ain't a-singin' it out like a Halleloolya needer, an' she don't stir from where she's a-settin', an' she don't say how-dy-do. She yust look at him like she's seen him befo'e, an' like she ain't a breakin' her neck if she don't never see him agen.

“But Ou' Jackalse he ain't a-seein' nawtin' but what she's yust as glad to see him as if he was a predicant. 'I's got a bit of a note here from your man,' ses he. 'P'r'aps you don't mind readin' it an' den you'll know,' ses he.

“Missis Wolf she cock her nose down at dat note, an' den Missis Wolf she slant her eye up at Ou' Jackalse. But Ou' Jackalse he yust kep' on between a sort o' smilin' to see her keepin' so well, and a sort o' dat tired feelin' dat life's sich a one-hawse business anyhow, till at last she up an' took darie paper.

“She turn dis piece o' paper dis way an' turn it dat way, an' upside-down an' t'oder-side-to, an'

at last she ses, ses she, ‘I don’t never could read pen-writin’ so well’s I could book letters, an’ darie Ou’ Wolf he write sich a terr’ble fist anyhow. I al’ays said he ought to be sent to school agen. You better to read it fo’ me,’ ses she.

“Ou’ Jackalse he took de paper as if it ain’t nawtin’ anyhow, an’ he looks as if livin’ ain’t no more’n a team o’ donkeys an’ a ole rope harness to a buck waggon nohow. Den he reads it off to hisse’f, sort o’ mutterin’ it over fus’ to see what it’s all about, an’ den he ups an’ talks it off about as happy as if it give him a hoe an’ sent him into de ’acco lan’s.

“‘Oh,’ he ses. ‘Your man he yust ses for you to gi’ me dem hin’quarters o’ darie Eland I yust bargained for wid him. But, Siss! it ’pears he want me to car’ it home myse’f, an’ all de time he bargain to do dat fo’ me. Ne’er mind dough; now I’s here I met as well take it anyhow. But I’ll have a few remarks wid Ou’ Wolf when I sees him agen.’

“Missis Wolf she look at Ou’ Jackalse, an’ Ou’ Jackalse he smile as if it’s all right an’ quite nice dere in de sun. Den Missis Wolf she look at darie paper an’ she shake her head yust once. ‘Yes,’ ses she, ‘I s’pose you will ha’ to take it if you bargained for it atween you, but—you le’ me have darie paper an’ den I’s’ll have a few remarks too wid Ou’ Wolf when I see him agen,’ an’ she look at Ou’ Jackalse as if dat was gun’ to be a bit of all right.

“Ou’ Jackalse he han’ over darie piece o’ paper as polite as sugar cane, an’ he take over de hin’quarters of Eland wid a look on his face like dat meat was a hoe on a hot day. An’ he grunt

an' he grumble all de way he go till he's out o' sight an' hearin'.

“Den,—well, if you wantto know yust what sort o' good ole time he had over darie breakfas', you should ha' seen him comin' out in de sun agen ahter it, his hair all shinin' wid fat an' his tail a-hangin' down straight 'cause he's too full to cock it.

“Well, ahter all, he's got to be gittin' away an' seein' to King Lion pretty quick if he ain't a-goin' to get into moh trouble dan he can comb out of his hair in a twel'-mont', but he do feel so good an' comfy all inside him dat he ain't in any baiya hurry even yet. ‘I s'pose I better take a book wid me,’ ses he to hisse'f. ‘Wife,’ ses he over his shoulder, back t'rough de do', ‘gi' me some sort o' book; any sort: darie ole almanac Ainkye was a-screevin' picters in'll do me yust a treat. Ou' King Lion he ain't a-gun' to look inside it.’

“So he gets dis almanac an' off he sets, an' if he don't skip and flick dis time, it's only because his wais'coat's too tight. But he pick 'is teef wid a long stem o' grass, an' he biff his hat back over one year, an' one time he's a-winkin' to hisse'f an' t'oder time he wave one arm an' sing ‘De Kimberleysa trainsa,’ like a location Kaffir wid two tickies in his pocket.

“Well, by'n'by he come to de place, an' he hear King Lion a-roarin' fit to shake de wind, till yust at first Ou' Jackalse he miss a step or two, tinkin' what nex'. Den he tink again, an' it wahnt a minute till he wink at hisse'f, an' he touch up darie ol' almanac under his arm to make

it look like it's mighty important. Den he set his hat on mighty straight an' pull down his coat, an' in he go.

“‘Vah vas yeh all dis time?’ roar Ou' King Lion, makin' all de place tremble.

“‘Please, sir,’ ses Ou' Jackalse, terr'ble busy to look at, ‘my fool missis she len' de medicine book to darie ou' gossippin' Missis Duck, an' I had yust a terror of a yob to spoor her out where she was a quackin' an' a scan'alin' till I got it back. But I sent de medicine on by Ou' Wolf here an' tole him what to do till I come.’

“‘Did you?’ roars King Lion, fair a-lashin' his tail in such a wax; ‘an' here he's bin standin' like a clay man all dis time, yust a-holdin' leaves an' roots, an' a-sayin' nawtin', an' my claw gettin' moh and wohse pain every minute!’

“‘Ou' Wolf he look at de King an' he begin to shake a bit. Den he look at Ou' Jackalse an' he won'er how in de worl' he come to forget what he ses he tell him. But Ou' Jackalse he look at Ou' Wolf yust as if he was fair disgusted wid such forgettin', an' den he look at de King's claw an' he shake his head. ‘It's gone pretty bad, but dere is yust one t'ing might cure it—it might.’

“‘What's dat?’ roars King Lion, an' Ou' Wolf he begin to feel de air shake in de roots of his hair.

“Well, sir,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, ‘if Ou’ Wolf ’ud bring his uncle or his cousin I don’t know. But,’—an’ he shake his head, an’ tap de ole almanac under his arm, an’ look solemn all over—‘dis book ses de same an’ I agrees wid it, ’cause I’s found it so; dere’s nawtin’ else for it but you take de skin of a live wolf an’ wrop it roun’ you’ paw till it get well. Ou’ Wolf’s uncle now,’ ses he.

“Ou’ Wolf hisse’f!’ roars King Lion, an’—clip!—he make a dive to gash a-hold of Ou’ Wolf. But Ou’ Wolf he’d bin a-feelin’ somet’in’ comin’, feelin’ it in his bones, an’ Ou’ Jackalse hadn’t more’n said ‘Wolf!’ dan Ou’ Wolf wasn’t dere—he was yust a-streakin’ out o’ dat till you couldn’t see him for heel dust.

“Well, sir,’ says Ou’ Jackalse, an’ he heaves a whackin’ big sigh ’cause he’s tinkin’ what Ou’ Wolfs gun’ to do to him now when he see him agen—‘I’m a gall darn sorry, you’ Majesty, but now you’s let Ou’ Wolf get away I can’t do nawtin’, on’y yust put some medicine on you’ claw till you ketch him agen.’ An’ wid dat he ups an’ he doctor darie ou’ claw an’ comes away. An’ he ain’t a skippin’ an’ he ain’t a singin’ nawtin’ about de ‘Kimberleysa trainsa’ dis time nudder, ’cause he’s tinkin’ a deal about what Ou’ Wolf’s a-gun’ to do.

“Ahter dat Ou’ Jackalse keep his eye skin’ pretty clear all de time, an’ Ou’ Wolf keep his eyes yust a-yinglin’ till he hear King Lion’s got well again. Den he say to hisse’f, ‘Now I’s gun’ to get square wi’ darie Ou’ Jackalse—you watch me if I don’t,’ an’ off he go to see Ou’ Baviyàan

in de koppies.

“‘Mawnin’, Nief,’ ses he.

“‘Mawnin’, Oom,’ ses Baviyàan.

“‘Very dry,’ ses Ou’ Wolf; ‘d’ye t’ink we’l get rain pretty soon?’ ses he.

“‘Ou’ Baviyàan, he scratch his back, an’ he look roun’, an’ he chew de bark off’n a piece o’ stick. ‘P’raps it rain by’n’by,’ ses he. ‘Dese yer koppies pretty hot dis mawnin’.’

“‘Well,’ ses Ou’ Wolf, now he’d cleared de groun’ polite like dat, ‘you ’members darie skellum, Ou’ Jackalse, dat never pay you yet for all dat lamb meat an’ dat kid meat you let him have, don’t you?’

“‘Don’t I,’ ses Baviyàan, puckerin’ his eyebrows down an’ makin’ sharp eyes, an’ grabbin’ a fresh twig an’ strippin’ de bark off it—rip!—wid one snatch of his teef. ‘I just does.’

“‘Well now, look a-hyere, Nief,’ ses Ou’ Wolf. ‘I cahnt stan’ him no longer nohow. I’s just a-gun’ to get even wid him. He done one t’ing an’ he done anoder t’ing, an’ he don’t pay me for

de hin'quarters o' de finest Eland you ever seen, an' so I votes we yust stops all dese little die-does of his. Wat you say now if we go an' give him such a shambokkin' till he don't stir out till dis time nex' year?'

“Ou' Baviyàan look at de little bird in de tree, an' Ou' Baviyàan look at de little shiny lizard on de rock. An' he looks at Ou' Wolf an' he looks round agen, an' he yumps an' he biffs a scorpion what he sees him wriggle his tail out from under a stone. Den he say, ses he, ‘Yeh, but how's I know you ain't a-gun' to streak it out o' dat as soon's Ou' Jackalse prance out for us? Den where'd I be, huh?’

“‘But who's a-gun' to run away?’ ses Ou' Wolf, swellin' hisse'f out mighty big. ‘D'ye mean to say I's a-gun' to run away f'm a skellum like dat? Me scared o' him? Huh!’

“Ou' Baviyàan, he scratch hisse'f on de hip, an' he eat what you cahnt see out'n his finger an' t'umb. ‘Den what you want me to help you foh?’ ses he, kind o' pucker in' his eyes an' glintin' here an' dere in Ou' Wolf's face.

“‘Oh, dat's all right,’ ses Ou' Wolf, an' he try to t'ink so quick dat de inside his head tumble all over itself like rags in a basket upside down. ‘On'y if I go an' do it my lone se'f, den people t'ink it's yust fightin', an' dey say, ‘Poor Ou' Jackalse’. But if we go an' do it, all two of us, den dey say, ‘What's darie ou' skellum bin up to dis time?’ Dat's why I come for you, Nief.’

“Ou’ Baviyàan, he screw hisse’f roun’ on his part what he sits on, an’ Ou’ Baviyàan, he screw hisse’f back, an’ he look at a fly dat wants to light on Ou’ Wolf’s nose. ‘Look a-hyer, Oom Wolf,’ ses he; ‘you show me some way to make sure dat you don’t run off an’ leave me on my own if Ou’ Jackalse do somet’in’, den I’ll listen to you. You can run yust as fast as he can, but dere ain’t no trees for me to yump for where Ou’ Jackalse live.’

“Ou’ Wolf he scratch his ear wid his back foot, but Ou’ Baviyàan he scratch his tummy wid his front han’. ‘Now you do dis, Oom Wolf,’ ses he; ‘you le’ me tie our tails togedder good’n fast so I know dey won’t come undone, den I’ll know you cahnt up an’ dust it out o’ dat an’ leave me when de time comes. You say yes to dat, an’ I’ll come.’

“Ou’ Wolf yust laugh right out. If he’d axed for it hisse’f he cou’dn’t a done better. Dat way he’s sure hisse’f dat Ou’ Baviyàan can’t skip out an’ leave him needer, an’ he know Ou’ Baviyàan he’s pretty full o’ prickles to meddle wid in a tight corner. ‘Dere’s my tail,’ ses Ou’ Wolf; ‘you tie it fas’, an’ you yust keep on a-tyin’ till you’s satisfied.’

“So off dey starts.

“Well, I tole you Ou’ Jackalse he yust keep his eye a-rollin’ all dese days, an’ dis mawnin’ he was out in front of his house a-choppin’ out yokeskeys, an’ you believe me darie axe in his han’

was yust so sharp an' yust so bright in de sun dat it flashed like streaks o' hot lightnin' when he chop an' chip, an' keep on chip-a-choppin'. An' all de time his eye was yust a-smokin' an' a-burnin', till a long an' a long way off he sees Ou' Wolf an' Ou' Baviyàan a-comin' a-wobblin', terr'ble close alongside each oder, an' mighty awk'ard.

“Well, dat's about de funniest commando I ever did see,” ses he to hisse'f, wid his ear a-cockin' out, an' his nose a-cockin' up. An' den his tail begun to wilt a bit while he tink what he's goin' to do now.

“Den he scratch his ear, an' his tail begin to stick out agen, an' he wink one eye to his nose end. ‘Ou' Frow!’ ses he, back over his shoul'er to Missis Jackalse in de house.

“Ya, daddy!’ ses Missis Jackalse, stickin' her nose half an inch out o' de door.

“Now you be careful an' do yust what I tells you,” ses he. ‘When I stop choppin' den you pinch Ainkye, an' you pinch her till she fair bawls agen. An' when I shouts out for you to stop her a-squallin', den you answer up on you' top note an' say—“It's all you' own fault. You would bring you' baby up on nawtin' but wolf meat, an' now you shouts 'cause it cry fo' mo'.” You hear me now, don't you forget,’ ses Ou' Jackalse.

“Dat's all right,’ ses his ole missis.

“Well, along come Ou’ Wolf an’ his commando—one Baviyàan—an’ Ou’ Wolf he say, ‘What’s dat flashin’ like lightnin’ in Ou’ Jackalse han’? Hyere; I don’t know what’s a-gun’ to happen,’ ses he, an’ he ain’t a comin’ on so fast as he has bin.

“But Ou’ Baviyàan he answer pretty scornful like, ‘Dat’s yust a axe he’s a-choppin’ out yokeskeys wid. You ain’t a-gun’ to turn afeard, huh?’

“‘Who’s afeard?’ ses Ou’ Wolf, in yust such a bi-ig voice. ‘But it do look like a terr’ble sharp axe,’ ses he. ‘Why don’t he use a rusty ole, gappy ole axe, like anyb’dy else a-choppin’ out yokeskeys, I wantto know?’ An’ Ou’ Wolf he ’gun a-movin’ slower an’ slower. ‘I tink dat’s mo’en yust a axe,’ ses he.

“‘No backin’ out now,’ ses Ou’ Baviyàan, kind o’ rough.

“‘Ain’t my tail tied fast enough?’ savages Ou’ Wolf. ‘Di’n’t you tie it yourse’f?’ ses he, trying to stop still an’ argue de point.

“Ou’ Baviyàan he give a yank. ‘Come on now,’ ses he.

“‘Ain’t I?’ ses Ou’ Wolf, an’ he come yust half a step—to easy de pull on his tail. An’ while dey start to quar’lin’, Ou’ Jackalse he stop choppin’ an’ he lift up, an’ right den his Ou’ Missis she pincht Ainkye so she fair opens out a-bawlin’ till her eyes shut tight. You could hear it a mile off.

“Den Ou’ Jackalse he shout out, ‘If you don’t stop dat Ainkye a-squallin’ like dat den I’ll come inside dere, an’ she’ll get somet’in’ to squall for,’ ses he.

“‘It’s all you’ own fault,’ screams Ou’ Missis (an’ don’t she yust like to say it! It makes her feel good an’ good to talk back to her Ou’ Baas once, i’stead of on’y tinkin’ back). ‘You goes an’ brings up you’ chile on nawtin’ but wolf meat, an’ den you ’gins to shout when she’s yust so hungry fo’ mo’ dat she cahnt hold quiet.’

“‘Dat’s all right,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, (‘an’ don’ you get too high, Ou’ Missis,’ he puts in on de quiet, ’cause he hears what’s in her mind). ‘I send Ou’ Baviyàan out t’ree days back to bring some wolf meat, an’ here he comes now wid yust an ole scrag of a one. It look a bit flyblow a’ready, but it’ll do better’n nawtin’ I s’pose,’ ses he, an’ he pick up his axe, an’ he gin it a swing up an’ roun’ as if he’s a-openin’ his chest to slaughter lots.

“Ou’ Wolf he hear dat an’ he yust make one yump an’ land right roun’ wid his head where his tail was. He tinks it’s nawtin’ else but Ou’ Baviyàan is drawed him on an’ in to it, as Ou’

Jackalse ses. ‘Dat’s why you wanted my tail tied so fast, is it?’ ses he. ‘Dat’s it, is it?’ an’ he ramp an’ he yerk, an’ car’ on.

“‘It ain’t, fathead! big fathead!’ ses Ou’ Baviyàan, rearin’ an’ yankin’ to pull Ou’ Wolf roun’ again to face it. ‘Dat’s yust Ou’ Jackalse’s lies to scare you.’

“‘But Ou’ Wolf he see Ou’ Jackalse comin’, a-skippin’ an’ a-runnin’, wid de axe a-frolicin’ in his han’, an’ he yust gi’es one yank an’ lan’s Ou’ Baviyàan a yard back. Baviyàan he try to hold him, but about dat time Ou’ Jackalse gets dere, an’ he ’gins to yump an’ dodge roun’, an’ all de time he’s shoutin’ out, ‘Stan’ over a bit, Nief Baviyàan; stan’ wide a bit till I gets a cle’r biff at him. Yust shift you’ head de oder side till I gaps him one wi’ dis yere axe.’

“‘Den dere was de fuss. De more Ou’ Baviyàan try to hol’ back de more Ou’ Wolf yerks him away, an’ de wusser Ou’ Jackalse sings out, till at last Ou’ Wolf he get dat ter’fied he fair yanks Ou’ Baviyàan right into de air an’ over an’ over, an’ den streaks out straight for de koppies, wid him on de end of him like a dog an’ a kettle.

“‘I tink dat’s about de finish to dat little lot,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, watchin’ de dust an’ de hair fly.”

Old Hendrik paused, looked the little girl very seriously in the eye; and then concluded, using his most impressive tones: “An’ if you don’ b’lieve me, den you yust look at Ou’ Baviyàan’s tail

nex' time he comes stealin' in de garden—you'll see de kink yet where it ain't never straighten out f'm dat day to this."

Old Jackal and Young Baboon

“Ou’ Ta’,” said the eldest boy the next evening, as they waited at the kraal for the coming of the cows to the milking, “you never told us what Old Bobbyjohn said to Old Wolf that time when he stopped running away from Old Jackalse at last.”

“No,” replied Old Hendrik, with a droll, droll leer; “an’ I’d hatto be a mighty sight smarter dan I ever ’members bein’ if I was to tell you dat. For when Ou’ Wolf stopped at last, den Ou’ Baviyàan yust looked at him; yust stopped an’ looked an’ untied his tail an’ crawled off. As you’ daddy ses—‘not a word, not a sound; not a whisper of a noise said he’. Ou’ Baviyàan yust saved it all up so he can tink it all over every time he see Ou’ Wolf agen. It’ll last him longer dat way.”

“So then he went home an’ put poultices on his tail, I suppose,” suggested Annie, impatient for every detail of the tale that must lie in the curing of that tail.

“Well, I dunno about no poultices on no tails,” returned Hendrik; “but a day or two ahter dat, Ou’ Jackalse was a-slinkin’ an’ a-slopin’ along de koppies, an’ yust as he come under a mispyl tree an’ tink he’s gun’ to have a rest an’ a look round, he gets a smack in de ribses wid one stone, biff! an’ anoder smack on de roots o’ de tail wid anoder, bash! An’, kleinkies, you should

yust a-seen him streak it out o' range o' dat ole mispyl tree.

“Den he stop an’ he look back, an’ dar he see Leelikie Baviyàan, Ou’ Baviyàan’s younges’ son, a-showin’ his head an’ shoul’ers out o’ de leaves o’ de mispyl, an’ a-yarkin’ an’ a-barkin’ at him. ‘Mighty smart you tinks you is, don’t you?’ snarls Leelikie. ‘But I’ll teach you to try tricks on de baviyàans,’ ses he.

“When Ou’ Jackalse see it’s dat young squirt, he gets dat mad he feel like bitin’ a chunk out o’ de biggest stone he can reach. But he knows he ain’t a-gun’ to get even wid young Leelikie, ’less’n he sof’ soap him down. So he yust grins like he is mighty astonish’, an’ rubs his ribs like dey’s sore as billy-o. ‘Well,’ ses he, ‘what tricks is I ever played on you?’

“‘None,’ ses Leelikie; ‘you bet you didn’t I’s too smart for no sich a fathead as you to play tricks on me. But you played one on my ole daddy, an’ I dropped in for it a lot worse troo him.’

“‘How’s dat?’ ax Ou’ Jackalse, yust a-squirmin’ like he cahnt keep still for his ribs a-hurtin him.

“‘Why, you rakes Ou’ Wolf till he cahnt stand no more o’ you, an’ den he gets my daddy to he’p him. An’ my ole daddy comes back wid his tail dat busted dat he cahnt on’y yust sit an’ nurse it an’ growl. An’ when he feel bad he alwiz wants gum, an’ he send me an’ my broder up de trees to get it. Den if I eats a bit myse’f, de ole daddy he shambok me till I has to fair yell enough to

make him tink he's killin' me 'fore he'll stop. Dat's how.'

“So all's de matter wid you is you has to give up de gum dat you picks, is it?” ses Ou' Jackalse.

“Dat's it, an' de shambokkin's for eatin' de leetle teenty bits I puts in my mouf,” ses Leelikie.

“Well, you is a nice 'un,” ses Ou' Jackalse, a-sneerin' like. ‘Why, if dat was me, I'd eat all de gum I picked an' still give de ole daddy all he wanted as well. I heerd you say you was mighty smart, but ahter dat,—well, I'd be ashamed o' myse'f if I wasn't smarter dan dat.’

“De way Ou' Jackalse stick his nose up fair rile Leelikie. ‘Yis,’ ses he. ‘I hear you talk a lot, but I bet you cahnt show me how dat's done.’

“An' I bet I cahnt needer—not as soft as dat,” ses Ou' Jackalse. ‘You don't get me as cheap as dat. But I'll tell you what I'll do. You come here to-morrow an' you bring me some gum, nice clear gum, an' den I'll tell you how to do, so's you'll have all de gum you wants for yourse'f, an' leave all de shambokkins to your broder.’

“Shambokkins to my broder!” sings out Leelikie. ‘Oh, dat's de right-o tip. You come, an' I'll be here wid de gum, don't forget.’

“‘I won’t,’ ses Jackalse, an’ off he go, a-winkin’ to every bush as he pass it.

“Well, come next day, dere was young Leelikie up in de mispyl tree, an’ dere was Ou’ Jackalse at de foot of it lookin’ up. ‘Now, what’s dis game you’s goin’ to tell me?’ ses Leelikie.

“‘Where’s de gum first?’ ses Ou’ Jackalse.

“‘Here’s it,’ ses Leelikie, showin’ it. ‘Let’s hear de plan now.’

“‘Ho! you gi’e me de gum first so’s I’ll know it’s good gum,’ ses Jackalse.

“‘Oh, I’ll soon show you dat,’ ses Leelikie. ‘See me!’ an’ he bite off a big piece o’ de gum, an’ he smack, smacks wid his mouf like an ox team pullin’ its feets out o’ deep mud.

“‘Dat rile Ou’ Jackalse terr’ble. ‘Ho! yeh!’ shout he. ‘What’s you a-eatin’ up my gum for?’

“‘Cause you ses it ain’t good; I’s yust a-showin’ you how good it is,’ ses Leelikie, rollin’ his eyes at de rest of it. ‘Sides, it ain’t you’ gum till you tells me dis plan you bargain to, yestiday.’

“‘Ain’t I likely to tell you ’fore I gets de gum!’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, like he’d like to ketch hisse’f

doin' any sich a fool trick.

“An' ain't I likely to let you have dis gum 'fore you's told me de trick!' ses Leelikie leerin'.

“Ho, dat's de game, is it? Den I tink I'd better go 'long an' find you' broder—he won't want to cheat me,' ses Ou' Jackalse, an' he make as if he's a-gun' to slope right off out o' dat. He tinks dat's gun' to fetch young Leelikie to time.

“But—‘Oh, dat's all right,' ses Leelikie. ‘I can knock de pips off him any day, an make him tell me too. You go on, an' den I'll have dis gum to myse'f. Dat's so much ahead anyhow.’

“Ou' Jackalse stops, an' his eye look sort o' longin'. ‘Den you ain't a-gun' to trust me?’ ses he, as if dat's de last word he's gun' to say.

“Look a-hyer, Oom Jackalse,' ses Leelikie. ‘I has dis gum a'ready. I can see it, an' I knows it's good. But I hasn't got what you wants to give fo' it, an' I can't see it, an' I don't know if it's good. So I tink I'll make sure o' what I has,' ses he, openin' his mouf wide an' lettin' his tongue flop up an' down, while he holds de gum a little way off his eye wid de one hand and rub his tummy wid de oder. ‘Yum, yum, yum,' ses he.

“Well,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, as if he yust couldn’ he’p it. ‘You is a bright sort, you is, by de jimminy!’

“Young Leelikie he grin back like he tinks a lot o’ dat ‘Allah Crachty!’ ses he, ‘won’t my ole mammy be pleased to hear dat.’

“Ou’ Jackalse sees he’s on de wrong side de fence dis time. ‘Well, I s’pose we’ll ha’ to do sometin’,’ ses he. ‘Now, you put de gum dere on dat stone at de tree root an’ I’ll stand off here an’ tell you.’

“Right-o,’ ses Leelikie. ‘Here’s de gum,’ an’ he swings down an’ plants it on de stone—but he don’t leave it.

“By jimminy!’ ses Ou’ Jackalse at dat. But he sees he’s on de spike a’ right, an’ he’ll hatto be honest if he’s a-gun’ to get dat gum. So he up an’ tell young Leelikie how he done wid Ou’ Wolf an’ de bessie berries when de Mensefreiter had ’em. ‘All you has to do den,’ ses he, ‘when you goes up into de tree wid you’ broder, is to eat all de gum you picks you’s’e’f an’ den swop you’ calabas’ fo’ his when he ain’t lookin’. Den you’ll be all right, an’ he’ll get de shambokkin, when you takes de calabashes down to you’ daddy.’

“Dat do sound mighty smart,’ ses Leelikie, like he’s admirin’ it immense. ‘But’—an’ yust as Ou’ Jackalse is makin’ one fair ole dive for him an’ de gum, he grabs it up an’ skips right up

into de tree agen.

“Ou’ Jackalse look up at him, an he look down at Ou’ Jackalse. ‘T’ank you, Oom,’ ses he. ‘Here I t’ought I’d ha’ to pay dis gum for you tellin’ me sometin’, but now—well, now, I’ll scoff it myse’f.’

“Ou’ Jackalse yust had his mouf open to shout like mad when he see de gum go up de tree, but dat last words o’ young Leelikie ’stonish him dat much he stop right short. ‘What’s dat little lot fo’?’ ses he.

“‘What fo’? Oh, for instance,’ ses young Leelikie, bitin’ at de gum till de clear part run all down his chin.

“Ou’ Jackalse down below fair ramp on his hind legs agen at dat. ‘Didn’t I tell you what I said I’d tell you, you skellum?’

“‘Did you, billy-o!’ ses Leelikie, bitin’ some more gum. ‘You said you’d tell me how to get me all de gum an’ my broder all de shambokkins. But my broder ain’t no fool, Ou’ Wolf: dere ain’t no time when he ain’t a-lookin’, so dere ain’t no changin’ calabashes wid him. He’s yust as smart as rock aloes, an’ he’d about knock all de hair off me de first time I tried it. So here eats de gum I’s got an’ chance it fo more.’

“‘Didn’ you say you could knock de pips off him any day?’ shouts Ou’ Jackalse.

“‘Yes; but didn’ you notice dat he wahnt anywhere in hearin’ when I said it?’ ses Leelikie.

“‘Well, I’s got you, anyway,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse. ‘You’ll ha’ to come down out o’ dat tree sometime, an’ here I’ll be ready.’

“‘Dat’s yust all right,’ ses Leelikie. ‘My daddy an’ de rest o’ de baviyàans is comin’ dis way in a bit. Den p’r’aps you’ll stop some more dan you want to.’

“‘Ou’ Jackalse skip roun’ to look, an’ dere he ketch a glimp’ o’ de ruffy ole, snappy ole scout dat leads de baviyàans when dey’s feedin. An’ didn’ Ou’ Jackalse get out o’ dat, dat’s all.

“‘Well, he slink off over de rise an’ sit him down to tink how he’s a-gun’ to get even wid young Leelikie. But young Leelikie he yust swings down out o’ de mispyl tree an’ slants off to de rest o’ de baviyàans, an’ ’gins to turn over de stones fo’ scorpions an’ tarantulas an’ all de rest o’ de tit-bits de baviyàans likes.

“‘By’n’by dey comes to a place where dere’s some big ole Doorn trees, fair sticky wid de gum runnin’ out o’ ’em. Young Leelikie he looks up at de gum an’ he looks at his daddy, an’ he tinks

here's yust a good ole chance fo' gum if he can work it. Den he tink an' he study an' he won'er, till at last he smack hisse'f in de ribses—he's got it.

“Daddy,’ ses he to Ou’ Baviyàan, ‘you’d like to get a chance at darie Ou’ Jackalse, wouldn’ you?’

“Wouldn’ I yust,’ ses his daddy, his eyes fair shinin’ red.

“Well, daddy,’ ses young Leelikie, an’ he look as slim as nex’ week, ‘here’s you’ chance. You sees all dis gum; now if you gets it all an’ smears it all over me, yards t’ick, an’ den gi’es me a big ole lump of it in my hand an’ sets me on a stone in de sun, while all de rest o’ you feed away till you gets over de rise; well, I’ll soon get Ou’ Jackalse for you.’

“How’ll you do dat?’ ax de ole daddy, sort o’ tryin’ to guess where de young fella’s tryin’ to sell him.

“You’ll see a’ right enough, if you watches,’ ses Leelikie. ‘An’ you’ll ha’ to watch like t’ieves, an’ come a-scootin’ an’ a-boundin’ when I shouts. Dere won’t be no time to catch tings out o’ you’ tail on de way.’

“Well, Ou’ Baviyàan he look at young Baviyàan, an’ he weigh it all up an’ he won'er, an’ while

he's a-doin' dat young Leelikie sort o' knock up against dat sore tail of his daddy's. Dat settle it. Ou' Baviyàan he wants Ou' Jackalse, an he wants him very bad, an if de young fella tinks he knows of a plan—why, he's about as smart a young baviyàan as dere is in de koppies, so he'll let him try anyway.

“So dey gets all dis gum, sticky ole gum, an' dey rubs it into young Leelikie's hair, an' dey daubs an' dey plasters an' dey piles it on till at last he's yust dat tick wid de gum he cahnt stir. Den dey sits him nice an' comfy on a nice big stone, an' dey puts a whackin' ole chunk o' half baked gum in his hand in front of his mouth, an' dere dey leaves him.

“Now dis is de time young Leelikie 'xpected to get in his work on de gum. He reckoned he'd be yust wolfin' down dat gum, first de big chunk in his hand an' nex' to scrape hisse'f clean o' what's on him. But ole sun had a say in dis f'm above, an' de hot stone had a say in it f'm below, till 'fore de rest o' de baviyàans had got out o' sight, de gum was dat sticky dat he couldn' stir hand or leg; not so much as wiggle his head. An' dar's Ou' Jackalse a-creepin' an' a-peepin' an' a-watchin' him.

“For Ou' Jackalse he'd bin yust dat mad he'd follo'd on ahter de baviyàans, yust as young Leelikie made de rest tink he would. But Leelikie ha'n't reckoned he was a-gun' to be stuck like dis. He'd reckoned he'd be finis' eatin' de gum while Ou' Jackalse 'ud be waitin' for de rest to get far enough off, an' dat 'ud give him yust de right time to be skippin' back out o dat.

Whereas—here he wuz.

“An’ here was Ou’ Jackalse too, yust a-dancin’ an a-prancin’. ‘I’s got you dis time!’ ses he. ‘I’s got you at last, gum an’ all! Won’t I yust teach you!’

“Young Leelikie nearly busted a-tryin’ to loose hisse’f, an’ when Ou’ Jackalse seen how fast he was, he yust sit down an’ open his mouf an’ lick his chops. ‘Look at my teef,’ ses he. ‘Now I has you!’

“Young Leelikie tried to let a yell out o’ him for his daddy to come an’ he’p him, but his yaws was yust dat bunged up wid gum dere wahnt no openin’ dem needer. ‘Oh, ain’t you nice an’ fat,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, watchin’ him an’ grinnin’. ‘Yust feel here where I’s gun’ to take de first bite,’ ses he, an’ he digs young Leelikie in de ribs wid his right han’.

“But yust about dat time he cahnt pull dat hand away to dig young Leelikie somewhere else. ‘You make los’ my hand,’ ses he, mighty snappy; ‘make it los’, or I’ll biff de pips off you,’ ses he, an’ he smacks his toder hand agen Leelikie’s ribses to give him a stand to get de oder away. An’ right dere dat’s fast too.

“Ou’ Jackalse’s years begin to stick up. ‘Allah Crachty!’ ses he, ‘if you don’t make los’ my fisties I’ll yust knock seven kinds o’ chicken feed out o’ you. Make los’, you skellum!’

“But young Leelikie on’y wished he could make los’, or do anytin’ else but yust sit an’ say nawtin’, an’ wish his daddy was comin’. Den Ou’ Jackalse’s eyes begin to stick out wid ’fraid o’ dis baviyàankie dat holds him an’ ses nawtin’. He tinks if he don’t get his hands loose sometin’s a-gun’ to happen, ‘By de jimminy!’ ses he, grindin’ his teef, ‘if you don’t lemme los’ dis minute, I’ll bite you’ bally head off!’

“Wid dat he makes a reg’lar dive, teef first, to scoff young Leelikie’s head off, but he’s in such a sweat he grabs de chunk o’ gum in de hand instead, an dere he is, bofe hands fast an’ his head fast, an’ here’s Ou’ Baviyàan and Leelikie’s broder yust a flyin’ dis way now dey’s got Ou’ Jackalse fast.

“Ou’ Jackalse sees ’em comin’ an’ he hears ’em car-rackin’ an’ bar-rackin’, an’ he yust puts every hair o’ him into one mighty ole wrench or else he’s done for. Sometin’ had to come—sometin’ did—de seat o’ young Leelikie’s hide. For Ou’ Jackalse gi’en such a terr’ble ole yank, an’ de stone set back wid such a terr’ble ole stick fast, dat young Leelikie flew one way wid Ou’ Jackalse, an’ de seat of his hide stayed de oder way wid de gum on de stone; tore off wid a rip like a yard o’ calico.

“De stone yust sot tight an’ shined like he’s smilin’, but Ou’ Jackalse he whirraloo round dere like a fireworks. An’ about dat time Ou’ Baviyàan an’ de oder young baviyàankie made deir dive for him.

“Well, you never did see no sich a mix up. For Ou’ Jackalse he see dat dive yust in time, an’ he yanks tings round so dey dives not into him but into young Leelikie, an’ dere dey is, yust as fast as he is, an’ all pullin’ de roots out to get loose agen in different d’rections.

“But it he’p Ou’ Jackalse all de same. Two o’ dem pullin’ dat way an’ him pullin’ dis, de two o’ dem was boun’ to be strongest, an’ dey gi’es one Allah Crachty of a yank till dey fair tears—not demselves, but young Leelikie, loose from Ou’ Jackalse. An’ you can see to dis day how all de long hair was tore off his paws an’ his yaws so bad it never grow long any more,” ended Old Hendrik solemnly.

“Oh, but,” protested Annie, “what happened then when Ou’ Jackalse got loose?”

“Why dere wahnt nawtin’ to happen,” returned Old Hendrik in a little astonishment. “Ou’ Jackalse was loose, dat was what he was ahter, so he went home an’ sit down. But Ou’ Baviyàan he was yust dat proud o’ young Leelikie bein’ so smart as to ketch Ou’ Jackalse dat way, dat it set de fashion to leave de seat o’ you’ hide on a gummy stone, an’ dat’s how it comes dat all de baviyàans has a cobbler’s patch to sit down on nowadays. It ain’t for pretty but for proud dey wears it.

“So now you knows why,” ended Old Hendrik solemnly.

Why Old Jackal Danced the War-Dance

A solid burst of rain; the hissing, thrashing deluge of the high veldt had driven the hoe-wielders from the tobacco “lands,” and the old Hottentot had retired thankfully to the barn to work on a lambskin kaross he was making for the mistress. There the children found him, though for the moment they were quiet as their father stepped in to ask Old Hendrik, in his strong American accent, if this rain was likely to flush the Vaal too deep for crossing at the drift below.

“Well, baas,” answered he, “dis hyer rain won’t do it, p’r’aps, but I seen it pretty black up de river all dis mawnin’, an’ I reckon de drift’s a-gun’ to be too strong for goin’ a-visitin’.”

“Then I guess I ain’t a-tryin’ it,” decided the baas, withdrawing to the house.

The children took up the subject. “Is it goin’ to be just so big wide, Ou’ Ta’?” asked little Annie.

“Well, Ainky,” answered Old Hendrik, “p’r’aps it ain’t a-goin’ to be yust so wide’s it was when Ou’ Jackalse danced de war-dance, and Ou’ Mensefreiter hit hisse’f on a rock into no bigger’n a water-millon; but it’s a-goin’ to be too full fo’ your daddy to go yust sa’nterin’ troo it.”

“Oh, Ou’ Ta’, you never told us about that Mensefreiter at all,” cried the little girl reproachfully. “Didn’t I now?” cried Old Hendrik. “Well, I’d ought to anyhow, ’cause it was mighty tough times for Ou’ Jackalse an’ Ou’ Wolf dem days. Besides, dis is de same drift right hyer below.

“You see,” he went on, squaring himself on the sack of mealies which served him for a seat, “times was hard wid all sorts of folk dat year. De rinderpest come along, an’ it just clean out all de game an’ de buck, till Ou’ Jackalse an’ Ou’ Wolf dey may hunt all day an’ dey may hunt all week an’ Sunday, an’ den dey won’t get de shadda of a buck. Dey ha’ to keep on a-drinkin’ water to keep deir tummies from growin’ front an’ back togeder.”

“An what did Missis Jackalse an’ little Ainky Jackalse do for sometin’ to eat, then?” asked Annie anxiously.

“Oh, dere was no Missis Jackalse den,” answered the old Hottentot cheerily. “Dis was long ’fore that Dis was when Ou’ Jackalse an’ Ou’ Wolf was young fellas, an’ don’t only go roun’ upsittin’ wid de nices’ young misses dey can hear of. An’ it stand ’em in han’ to be young fellas an’ to had no fam’lies; ’cause de young fellas can scratch all day if dey like an’ den dere ain’t nawtin’ to eat.

“Well, you knows Ou’ Jackalse is mighty slim a-gettin’ scoff if dere’s anybody else has some, but it wahnt no use waitin’ to steal what oder folk ain’t polished off, ’cause dere ain’t nawtin’

for oder folk to begin on, let alone to leave for him to sneak it. He yust ha' to hump hisse'f an' rustle roun' if he's a-gun' to get anytin'. An' dis is where Ou' Jackalse's bein' so smart come in handy. Ou' Wolf he keeps a-gauntin' an' a-wobblin' on ahter de buck he tink he might see over de nex' rise, but Ou' Jackalse he yust keep his eye skinned to size up what's on de yonder side de ridge.

“Well, by'n'by he sees a farm where dere's a patch o' to'acco wanted 'tendin' to mighty bad, an' de farmer he's a-leanin' on de gate an' first a-lookin' at de row an' den a-lookin' at de hoe, as if fo' one ting he can't make up his mind where he's a-gun' to begin, an' as if for anoder ting he can't yust settle if he's goin' to start at all dis mawnin' nohow.

“Ou' Jackalse he look, an' he sit down, an' he 'gun to brush de grass behin' him wid his tail, sort o' slow an' like he's tinkin' pretty deep. He can't eat tobacco; he know dat, but de man what work in de to'acco he can eat sometin', an' sometin' a long shot better'n to'acco—he eat scoff. So Ou' Jackalse he make up his mind an' down he go to de farmer.

“‘Mawnin', baas!’ ses he. ‘Darie to'acco 'gin to look as if some of it's goin' to run wild an' some of it goin' to choke 'fore long,’ ses he.

“‘Oh! 'tain't nawtin' to shout about yet,’ ses de farmer. ‘A good man an' a good hoe soon set dat a'right agen.’

“Well, what you reckon you’s goin’ to give de good man fo’ usin’ de good hoe an’ doin’ it?’ ses Ou’ Jackalse straight out.

“Oh, I give him his scoff, an’ a twist o’ to’acco,’ ses de farmer, lazy like.

“Hu!’ ses Ou’ Jackalse. ‘Ain’t you feared you’ll send him to drink an’ to end up in de tronk wid all de money he’ll have fo’ spendin’?’ An’ Ou’ Jackalse he fair sniff a bit.

“De man turn roun’. ‘You please yourse’f,’ ses he. ‘I tink scoff’s a lot in dese times, when de rinderpest is kill off not on’y all de meat but all de oxen too, so we cahnt fetch nawtin’ from nowhere.’

“Well, good scoff?’ axes Ou’ Jackalse, like he want to make de best of it.

“Dere ain’t on’y one sort o’ scoff at my place,’ ses de man. ‘Same sort o’ scoff I get myse’f.’

“Well, you leave de hoe here an’ I see about it,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, an’ de man he yust drop dat hoe like it was hot, an’ offs home to sit in de cool an’ drink coffee.

“So Ou’ Jackalse he’d made a start anyhow; he’d got a job at least. But if you tink he’s goin’ to

balance hisse'f on de end o' dat hoe, well, you's got hold o' de wrong ox dis time. He yust come along to Ou' Wolf. 'At last,' ses he. 'At last I's got a sight to get some scoff anyhow,' an' he fetch a big ole breaf like as if a sack o' Kaffir corn flop off his back.

“How's dat?” ses Ou' Wolf, a-sittin' down an' proppin' hisse'f up wid his front foots, an' his tongue hangin' out like a sheepskin.

“Dere's a farmer de yonder side de ridge, an' he want some'dy to do a bit in his to'acco, an' he'll give us a share of his scoff same as hisse'f,” ses Ou' Jackalse; an' he look at Ou' Wolf as if he ought to drop two tickies in de bag next time he goes to church, like an ole dopper farmer when de rain save de crop.

“But Ou' Wolf he look at Ou' Jackalse sort o' s'picious. ‘Do a bit in de to'acco?’ ses he. ‘Dat's work, ain't it?’ ses he.

“An' mighty glad to get it,” ses Ou' Jackalse, out big an' loud, makin' as if he was just wishin' dere was a hoe dere dis minute, so he could lick right in.

“But—work,” ses Ou' Wolf, an' he droop his head an' he shake it slow an' swingin'.

“Well,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, sort o’ like he’s ponderin’ it. ‘Darie baas he reckon de man on de hoe is a-gun’ to be workin’, but de man on de hoe he might reckon he don’t know so much about dat. He might reckon he’ll knock it off in his own time. He might s’pose it’s him ha’ to do it; an’ he might ’member dat de longer dat yob last de longer his scoff last. See? fathead!’ ses he.

“Well, I wants de scoff,’ ses Ou’ Wolf; ‘dere ain’t no shadda ’bout dat. But, de work; I don’t know,’ ses he.

“Now you look-a’-me,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, ’s if he was fair tired o’ fool argyin’. ‘You knows me. Is I likely to make de grass fly much a-workin’? or is I de sort o’ one to work at all if dere was any oder snift of a chance o’ scoff?’ ses he.

“Ou’ Wolf tink he know Ou’ Jackalse pretty well by dis time. ‘No,’ ses he, kind o’ considerin’.
‘I don’t tink you’d work if dere was any oder chance,’ ses he.

“Come along o’ me, den,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, an’ away dey pops.

“Ou’ Jackalse he bring Ou’ Wolf along to de gate an’ he give him darie hoe. ‘Dis is you’ patch,’ ses he, ‘mine’s furder along on de yonder side de house. I’ll bring de scoff at dinner time, an’ in de meantime you yust get a sort o’ wiggle on you, like’s if you could work if you had to,’ an’ off he stalk till he get out o’ sight. Den he flop down an’ bake hisse’f in de sun.

“Well, Ou’ Wolf he gets a sort o’ stroke on him like a bywoner dat tinks it’s a-pretty near time he shifted to some farm where dey don’t raise no crops nohow, and den about an hour before noon along comes Ou’ Jackalse agen, an’ he looks at what Ou’ Wolf’s done, an’ he slant his eye at what he ain’t done, an’ he tinks dere’s a fair ole little lot o’ dat yet.

““Look-a’-me, Ou’ Wolf,’ ses he. ‘It’s a-comin’ along to dinner time soon, but you; you yust about ain’t if dat’s all you’s done yet. De baas he’ll tink what I done, an’ he’ll see what you ain’t done, an’ den, why, dere you is! You ought to be sorry fo’ you’s e’f, when you looks at what you done.’

““I yust is,’ ses Ou’ Wolf, an’ he ain’t a-considerin’ ’fore he ses it needer. ‘I yust is,’ an’ he sort o’ squint up at de sun to see how soon it’s a-gun’ to be noon, an’ he sort o’ guess at de row to see how soon it ain’t likely to be done.

““Well, it ain’t my look out if de baas don’t gi’e you no scoff fo’ dat bit,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse. ‘I got you de work, but you cahnt look fo’ me to do it fo’ you too, as well’s my own. I cahnt only ’pologise fo’ you. You better get a bit wigglier wiggle on you if you wants some dinner, anyhow,’ ses he, an’ off he pops.

“Well, Ou’ Wolf he tinks p’r’aps he had better hump hisse’f along a bit an’ make a kind of a shine anyhow. ‘I ain’t a-gun’ to let no sich a skellum ha’ to ’pologise fo’ me,’ ses he, an’ he yust

lit into dat row like he wants to get de baas to let him opset wid his daughter.

“Den it come along to noon, an’ de farmer he come out to see what about de hoein’. Ou’ Jackalse he pop up out o’ de long grass an’ meet him. ‘I was yust a-comin’ fo’ de scoff,’ ses he.

“‘Scoff fo’ dat much?’ ses de farmer; ‘an’ two o’ you too!’ ses he.

“‘Well,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, ‘we’s a bit gone in fo’ want o’ scoff, dese last days since de rinderpest, so p’r’aps we ain’t a-quite got into de stroke yet. But if we has a good dinner to-day, why den to-morro’—well, to-morro’,’ ses he, an’ he t’row out his ban’s like to-morro’ dey’ll yust scoff darie hoein’!

“‘Well, we’ll see,’ ses de farmer. ‘You can come along now an’ get de scoff,’ an’ so dey goes.

“‘Well, dis yere scoff turn out to be all bisceyt, Boer bisceyt, an’ de baas he give Ou’ Jackalse enough fo’ bofe o’ dem, an’ Ou’ Jackalse he start back.

“Now on de way he see a bushy little bush, an’ he t’row one bisceyt in dere to hide it. An’ on de way he seen anoder little bush, an’ he t’row anoder bisceyt into dat bush too, an’ he do like a-dat till he ha’n’t on’y one bisceyt left. An’ den he up an’ show Ou’ Wolf dat leetle one bisceyt. ‘Dat’s all de man had,’ ses he. ‘One f’r hisse’f, one f’r his wife an’ childer, an’ one f’r us. But

he's a-gun' to have mo' to-morro', he ses.'

“I reckon he yust is,’ ses Ou’ Wolf, letting de hoe drop like he never had hold of it yet. ‘If he’s a-gun’ to get any more o’ dis yere lan’s hoed den he yust is. How’s I a-gun’ to hoe to’acco on half a bisceyt?’ ses he. ‘An’ dis is de sort o’ yob you was so sa’cy dat you’d got it to keep us f’ m starvin’, is it?’ ses he. ‘A whole one half o’ one bisceyt!’ snorts he, ’s if he wants to see some’dy yust step on his shadda, dat’s all.

“Well, half o’ one bisceyt—dat’s a deal better’n de whole o’ one day widout no scoff at all,’ sniffs Ou’ Jackalse, mighty insulted. ‘But den, never mind. I is a bit stronger’n you, anyhow; so you yust eat my half o’ dat bisceyt as well’s your own, an’ I’ll slip back an’ eat some o’ de corn I seen dropped by de barn. Dere’s two-t’ree grains dere yet if de birds ain’t pick ’em up ’fore dis,’ an’ off he flops, lookin’ yust as full o’ pious as a location predicant (Parson) when he’s got a good collection on a Sunday.

“Ou’ Wolf he feel a mighty sneak to let Ou’ Jackalse lose his half de bisceyt like dat, but he don’t can he’p it nohow, an’ he’s yust so ’ongry dat while he bite off his own half o’ de bisceyt he mess de yonder half de same time, an’ den he might yust as well eat dat half too, ’cause he cahnt offer it to Ou’ Jackalse now when it’s all mussed. An’—well; de fus’ ting Ou’ Wolf know, gop! he scoff dat half too. But he feel dat mean dat he work dat hoe like steam to easy his mind a bit.

“All dis time Ou’ Jackalse he’s a-pickin’ up dem bisceyt he hid in de bushes, an’ yust a-blowin’ hisse’f out, till he cahnt on’y wink an’ har’ly stir his tail where he lie an’ bake alongside a stone.

“Well, it go on like dis for one day after anoder, till one day along comes Ou’ Mensefreiter, an’ he see Ou’ Wolf a-hoein’ in de to’acco, an’ he see Ou’ Jackalse a-snuggin’ an’ a-bakin’ atween a bush an’ a stone. ‘Wotto!’ ses Ou’ Mensefreiter. ‘Here’s two,’ an’ he fair seizes ’em, an’ he offs.”

“But Ou’ Ta’,” interjected the little girl. “What was that Mensefreiter like?”

“Oh, he was one o’ dese yere bo’-constructors yo’ daddy tells you about. An’ yet he don’t was yust a constructor needer. He was one o’ dese puff-adders what spring t’ree yards high an’ t’ree yards far at you, quicker’n you’ eye can flash to watch ’em; only he was de granddaddy of ’em all, an’ so he was bigger’n a bo’-constructor, an’ de same way he could strike forty yard high, an’ forty yard far, an’ forty times quicker’n de biggest puff-adder dat ever make you yump an’ run in de veldt. An’ he yust grab dese two and offs wid ’em to where he live—an’ dat’s de yonder side de drift down here.

“Well, de Mensefreiter he took de two out an’ look ’em up an down, top an’ bottom, as soon as he gets to his kraal. He feel Ou’ Wolf’s bones an’ he shake his head. ‘You is pretty fine drawn,’ ses he. ‘It ’ud take two o’ you to make a shadda. You’ll want some fattin’ ’fore you’s good

enough for a bile, let alone a roast.’

“Den he feel Ou’ Jackalse, an’ he sort o’ smile all de way down his back. ‘Well, you bin have a high ole time, ain’t you, wid all dat fat on you? A week’s feedin on de berries here’ll give you yust a nice flavour,’ ses he.

“So nex’ day he gi’en ’em baskets; a sort o’ baskets like a bottle, so’s you cahnt open it, an’ so’s you cahnt get your hand in. You yust drops de berries in, an’ den Ou’ Mensefreiter he unlock de lid an’ see how much you fetch home. An’ off dese two flops to pick berries.

“‘Now look-a’-me,’ ses Ou’ Wolf to Ou’ Jackalse. ‘You better don’t eat too much now, else you’ll get scoffed ’fore you know it. You better to get t’in like me an’ den you’ll live longer. I’s yust a-gun’ to pick berries till de sweat run, den Ou’ Mensefreiter ain’t a-gun’ to was’e time eatin’ me, I’ll keep dat t’in.’

“‘A’ right I’ll tink on,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, but he ain’t no more’n see de berries in de sun dan he wink to his nose end. ‘I’s fat,’ ses he to hisse’f. ‘I’s fat, an’ I’s a-goin’ to keep fat Ou’ Mensefreiter ain’t a-eat me yet, and he ha’n’t better hold his breat’ till he does, needer, else he’s likely to get black in de face ’fore he finis’.’

“Next he tas’e one berry, an’ ahter dat he yust about put one berry in his basket and forty-one in

his mout', till the yuice run all down his chest, an' he feel dat good he yust cahnt he'p it but he fair stan' on his head wid fun like a wildebeeste.

“Well, it come along to time to get back to de kraal, an' yust when Ou' Wolf was fair a-workin' an' a-snatchin' at de berries to fill his basket, Ou' Jackalse he sort o' sa'nter past de basket behind him an' swop his own for it, yust so slim an' so quick dat Ou' Wolf never dream on it. On'y when dey start fo' de kraal, he say. ‘Dese yere berries is mighty light, considerin' what a lot I picked an' all,’ an' he mop his fore'ead as if he's glad dat yob's done.

“Dis went on de same every day; Ou' Wolf bringin' yust a han'ful home, an' Ou' Jackalse a fat basket, till one day Ou' Mensefreiter he wink at Ou' Jackalse. ‘You is a bit slim, ain't you, bringin' all your berries home an' eatin' none, so's you won't get no fatter, huh? But dis is where I comes in. I yust drops you inside dis hock,’ ses he, droppin' him in an empty place like a pigsty, ‘an' I fat you up wid seven days' feed o' pun'kin like a little pig. Den we'll see if you don't make de finest kind o' dinner,’ ses he. ‘An' you, Ou' Wolf,’ ses he, ‘you's de all right sort. Yust you keep on in de berries, eatin plenty like you bin a doin', an' den one o' dese days you'll be nice an' fat too.’

“Ou' Wolf he take his basket at dat an' off out to de bessie berries agen, an' he won'er a bit; an' Ou' Jackalse he stop in de hock an' he kind o' begin to won'er too. Dere's two or t'ree pun'kins, de finest kind o' pampoene, in de hock wid him—dat's his scoff fo' de day, an' if he don't eat

'em all up 'fore night, den he's yust agun' to ketch it.

“Well, Ou' Jackalse he look at dem pampoene an' he kind o' feel he ain't yust a-yeearnin' fo' dinner nohow. He look over de top o' de wall o' de hock, but he know it ain't no manner o' use to try an' run for it, 'cause Ou' Mensefreiter 'll snap him back 'fore he get into his stride har'ly. It ain't yust sich a fat time, bein' fat, ahter all, tinks he, an' he sort o' wish he had Ou' Wolf dere wid him somehow. He look dis way an' he look dat way, but dere ain't nawtin', on'y de little pat' a-runnin' down to de drift, and de drift a-risin' an' a-risin' wid it keepin' on a-rainin' an' a-rainin' up de river. It look mighty like Ou' Jackalse's name's goin' to be 'mud' dis time, an' his tail yust drop flop.

“Den he feel a sort o' quiet little twitch at his tail. He look roun' sharp, an' dere he see little Kleinkie Mousie. ‘What you bite me fo’?’ ses Ou' Jackalse, kind o' big, 'cause it kind o' give him a start wid makin' him tink it was Ou' Mensefreiter had him.

“‘You's got all dese pampoene, ain't you? An' I want to talk to you about de seeds for my dinner,’ ses Kleinkie, his eyes a-shinin' black an' his paws yust ready to off 'fore you can swip you' tail.

“Ou' Jackalse he know he can't eat de seeds hisse'f, an' besides he ain't yust dead gone on dem pun'kins nohow. He tink he might's well be a fine fella an' get his name up wid Kleinkie.

‘A’right,’ ses he, ‘if you want a dinner, why, dere you is,’ ses he, an’ he sweep his hand up like di’monds is dust an’ he’s yust scatterin’ dust down de wind. Den he lean up agen de corner o’ de hock an’ watch Kleinkie fair gnawin’ dem seeds, like it quite do him good to watch it.

“Well, dis went on till de sevent’ day, an’ to-morro’ mawnin’ Ou’ Jackalse is goin’ to be shove in de pot an’ roas’. He ’gin to look down his nose some, ’specially when he look at de pun’kin Ou’ Mensefreiter drop in fo’ him to eat dis day. It was yust one pun’kin, only one; but it was de biggest old pun’kin you ever did see. ‘If I did get myse’f wrop round de outside o’ dat pampoene I’d be sort o’ fat-lookin’ anyhow,’ ses he, an’ he smile kind o’ mournful.

“Den up pops little Kleinkie. ‘What’s de matter?’ ses he. ‘You looks like a location Kaffir when he bin had a night on Kaffir beer an’ den ha’ to work next mawnin’,’ ses he.

“‘Well,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse. ‘I never did work yet ’cept to get out o’ work. But if I don’t find some way o’ gettin’ out o’ dis ’fore night, widout Ou’ Mensefreiter seein’ me, den it’s mighty likely I’d be glad to ha’ de chance to go to work to-morro’ mawnin’.’

“‘A bit rough dat,’ ses Kleinkie. ‘If dere was any way I could he’p now?’

“Dat set Ou’ Jackalse to studyin’, an’ it ain’t a minute or two ’fore de twinkle ’gin to shine in his eye, and his tail begin to rise itse’f. ‘Look-a’-me now, Kleinkie,’ ses he; ‘dere is one way, if you an’ de rest o’ you’ people like to he’p a bit.’

“How’s dat?’ axes Kleinkie.

“Dis way,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse. ‘I cuts a hole in darie pampoene, an’ den you an’ de rest turn to an’ gnaw an’ scrape out de inside till dere ain’t on’y yust de shell left.’

“An’ den?’ axes Kleinkie.

“Oh, den you’ll see,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse. ‘You yust get darie pampoene scrape’ out first,’ ses he.

“Well,’ ses Kleinkie. ‘You gin us dem seeds a’right, you did, so now we’ll see what about dis job;’ an’ off he pop an’ fetch all de rest o’ de mouses, an’ it ain’t har’ly no time ’fore dey has dat pun’kin scrape as clean inside as de mealie pap pot in a bywoner’s fam’ly.

“See me now,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, an’ he lift darie pun’kin an’ he drop it qu-i-etly over de wall onto de groun’ outside, on dat side away from where Ou’ Mensefreiter’s lyn’ sunnin’ hisse’f. ‘See de drift down dere?’ ses he; ‘an see how high it is wid de flood? Well, once I get to de yonder side dat drift den Ou’ Mensefreiter cahnt folio’ me. Floods is dat much good anyhow. Now watch,’ ses he.

“Wid dat he wriggle hisse’f out ahter de pun’kin, yust as flat as a new skun sheepskin, an’ ’fore

you could look twice he wiggle hisse'f right into de inside o' dat pun'kin, till you couldn't see hide nor hair of him.

“Den Kleinkie hear him begin to sing, ve-ery soft an' low:—

“Pampoenekie; Pampoenekie,

Roll down de pat'ickie;

Pampoenekie pat'ickie,

Pampoene roll!

“An' darie pun'kin begun an' ro-o-oll.

“Den Kleinkie keep on a-watchin', an' darie pun'kin find de pat' dat run down to de drift. Kleinkie watch yet, an' darie pun'kin keep on a-rollin' an' a-swiftin' till, bounce! it splosh an' hit de water in de drift Kleinkie watch, an' darie pun'kin went so fast it yust swish right across to de yonder side de drift, an' Ou' Jackalse he step out an' snatch up a willow stick in one hand, an' a big leaf in de oder, like a assegai an' a shield, an' swip! he begin to do a war-dance, yust a-

leapin' high an' a-chantin.

“Ou' Mensefreiter he lift his head when de pun'kin 'gun to roll Ou' Mensefreiter he kink his back when de pun'kin hit de drift. But Ou' Mensefreiter, when he see Ou' Jackalse doin' darie war-dance—swip! he whip hisse'f t'rough de air, an' de first place he light was down by de edge o' de drift.

“Dat drift was mighty wider'n he ever tried it afore, but he see Ou' Jackalse a-springin' an' a-clinkin' his heels togeder on de yonder side, an' Ou' Mensefreiter he hump hisse'f agen, an'—swip!—he strike for it to get dat Jackalse anyhow.

“Forty yards was his everyday jump, an' sixty yards at Nachtmaal. But dis day he bested dat mor'n double, an' yet he don't do enough. Dere was a big rock a-stickin' out o' de water, a long way short o' bein' across, an' Ou' Mensefreiter come into it wid his nose, whack! smack! sich a bash an' a biff dat it yust drove his tail right on up into de inside of his head, an' dere he was, all in a ball no bigger'n a water-millon, an' he roll off into de water an' down he go wid de stream; a-rubble an' a-bubble, an' a-over an' a-pover, till he drowned. An dat's what happen to darie Mensefreiter,” finished Old Hendrik.

“An' what did Ou' Wolf do?” demanded the little girl.

“Oh, Ou’ Jackalse he shout for Ou’ Wolf to come along. But Ou’ Wolf he look at de drift an’ he look at Ou’ Jackalse. ‘Ain’t you a-comin’?’ shouts Ou’ Jackalse.

“‘What do I want to come for?’ ses Ou’ Wolf. ‘All de berries I pick now I’ll get a chance to eat ’em myse’f. An’ what do I want to come for? Eatin’ berries is better’n hoein’ to’acco for half a bisceyt a day. You go an’ hoe; I keep’s here wid de bessie berries. Besides—dere’s pun’kin.’”

“And what did Old Jackalse have to do then?” demanded the youngest boy.

“Well, I wouldn’ yust like to say what Ou’ Jackalse ha’ to do,” answered Old Hendrik. “But you can bet on what he didn’ do—he didn’ hoe.”

How Old Jackal got the Pigs

The pigs had been very troublesome all the morning, almost destroying the gate of the garden in their efforts to get at the tempting show within. It was in reward for the help of the children in driving the marauders away that Old Hendrik yielded at last to a question of Annie's and told them another tale.

“But you never told us, Ou' Ta',” said the little girl, “what Old Jackal did for something to eat in the rinderpest time, after he crossed the drift in the pumpkin. What did he do?”

“Well,” replied the old Hottentot, scratching his head, “I tole you what he didn't do—he didn't hoe. An' I'll tell you now dat, whatever he is do, it's a-gun' to be sometin' skellum. O' course, he hatto do sometin' to eat, now de game's all dead o' de rinderpest, an' he hatto do it quick an' lively too. So he go raungin' round, an' he trot dis way an' he trot dat way, an' de on'y chance he can see at all is at a farm where dere's some pigs.

“Dese yere pigs was all de time a-sneakin' into de lands, an' a-rootin' up de crops, an' de farmer he'd chase 'em out wid a long ox-whip till he nearly bu'st, an' den he'd stand an' mop his face an' swear what he's a-gun' to do wid dem pigs if he don't get some'dy to look ahter 'em soon. O' course, if Ou' Jackalse had a-bin Ou' Wolf he'd a-gone right up an' ax for de yob hisse'f, straight out, an' de ting 'ud be done an' no more about it. But he wahnt: he was yust Ou'

Jackalse, an' he done Jackalse—he plan'.

“De nex' time de man chase de pigs, Ou' Jackalse wait till dey gets into a leetle grass-pan, an' den he try to drive 'em off funder. But de man he'd seen him a-stalkin', an' he run along wid his whip an' fetch a cut so near his tail dat Ou' Jackalse near yump out troo his eyeholes, an' he fair light out f'm dere into some sugar cane an' hide.

“Well, dar he sit an' dar he tink an' study till he's added it all up, an' den he ses it out in once. ‘I'll hatto get Ou' Wolf here,’ ses he, breakin' off a piece o' sugar cane an' bitin' on it. ‘I reckon dat's what I'll hatto do; den I'll get dem pigs a' right.’

“Well, off he go, an' he come to de river side an' shout for Ou' Wolf. By'n'by Ou' Wolf come an' stand on de oder bank, and Ou' Jackalse make like he yust is s'prise' to see de look on him. ‘Why, what's de matter wid you?’ ses he. ‘You does look mighty bad.’

“‘I don't,’ ses Ou' Wolf out straight. ‘I feel yust dat good an' fat I wish dere was buck to hunt, even if I didn't ketch none.’

“‘Don't you b'lieve it,’ ses Ou' Jackalse, mighty concerned. ‘You yust looks good'n' bad. You take an' look at you' eyes; dey're all red an' yalla, like you's in a terr'ble state. An' look at de skin under your yaws, an den at de hair on de top o' you' head, an' you'll see straight off how

bad you is.’

“Well, Ou’ Jackalse speak dat se’ious dat Ou’ Wolf try to look where Ou’ Jackalse tell him. But he didn’ had no lookin’-glass, an’ he try to look widout one. An’ he look dat cross-eyed, tryin’ to see wid his one eye into his toder eye, dat he fair loose all de skin along bofe sides his ribses an’ stiffen his tail right flop up wid de pull in tryin’. An’ when he see dat his eyes cahnt see into one anoder, he ’gin to tink if he ain’t a bit bad ahter all.

“Den he try to see de skin under his yaws, and he twist an’ he snake till he fair stan’ on his head an’ scratch de air—an’ yet he cahnt get a look at it. Dat make him feel he ain’t a-feelin’ well at all. But when he try to ’xamine de hair on de top of his head, he get dat desprit he fair t’row a double back somerset an’ land hisse’f clean into de muddy river, an’ when he’s crawled onto a rock an’ stood a bit he makes up his min’ dat dere ain’t no two ways about it—he’s feelin’ bad.

“‘What’ll I ha’ to do for it?’ ses he to Ou’ Jackalse, ’cause Ou’ Jackalse is King Lion’s doctor.

“‘Well,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, ‘you see what it is. It comes o’ you’ eatin’ on’y dese yere bessie berries an’ pun’kin; an’ pun’kins is mighty bad widout some meat wid ’em. You’ll hatto yust eat meat for a while, dat’s what you’ll hatto do; an’ I’s sorry for dat, ’cause I’s yust found out where dere is some, an’ dere ain’t har’ly mo’ dan enough for me. But, bein’ as it is, an’ bein’ as it’s you, I s’pose I’ll hatto share wid you now, you an’ me bein’ such ole chummies. A’ right den; if

I has to do it I has to, so come on across an' we'll get it done,' ses he.

“Ou' Wolf he tink by jimminy Ou' Jackalse is yust about de decentis' chap he's seen for a long time. 'It's mighty good o' you to do it,' ses he; 'an' I ain't a-gun' to forget it needer.' Den he plunk into de drift an' come out on de bank. 'Where's dis yere meat at?' ses he.

“Well,' ses Ou' Jackalse, lookin' kind o' far away over his shoulder, 'it's a dis way. Over on de yonder side dat spruit dere's a farm where dey has some pigs, an' dese yere pigs is makin' a terr'ble trouble, rootin' up de mealie lands, an' de sugar cane, an' de water-millions; an de baas he says he want some'dy to look ahter 'em. You should hear him swear to dat Well now, you go an' take de yob o' mindin' 'em. Den you drive 'em down to de spruit to look ahter 'em, an' I'll be dere, an' we'll see what we do nex.'

“Right-o!' ses Ou' Wolf, an' off he go.

“Well, he gets de yob. 'Mind now an' keep you' eye open for a Jackalse dere is som'eres about,' ses de man. 'I seen him a'ready havin' a try for 'em.'

“Oh, I'll be a-lookin' out for darie Jackalse,' ses Ou' Wolf. 'I's seen him myse'f a'ready, an' he ain't a-gun' to get de best o' me,' ses he.

“So Ou’ Wolf he drives de pigses down to de spruit, an’ dar’s Ou’ Jackalse a-waitin’ him. ‘What we gotto do nex’?’ ses he.

“Ou’ Jackalse he stop chewin’ on de piece o’ sugar cane an’ he laugh right out. ‘I’ll show you,’ ses he. ‘Now we’ll yust drive de pigs into de donga here, an’ we’ll ketch ’em an’ cut off all deir tailses; every last one o’ dem.’

“Well, dey done it, an’ mighty hard work on sich a hot day too; an’ Ou’ Wolf notice every now an’ agen dat he’s doin’ most o’ de work an’ Ou’ Jackalse doin’ mighty little but de bossin’. But he don’t say nawtin’ yet, ’cause he feel he’ll yust hatto get cured. ‘An’ what do we do wid dese yere tails now?’ ses he when dey finis’.

“‘See dat mud hole?’ ses Ou’ Jackalse. ‘Well, you stick de tails all about in de mud, wid deir little curls a-curlin’ in de air. Do dat now.’

“Ou’ Wolf he done it. ‘An’ what’s de nex’ ting?’ ses he.

“‘Well, de nex’ ting is one ting, but dere’s anoder ting afore dat,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse. ‘De nex’ ting is for you to go an’ tell de man dat de wilde-honde come an’ chase de pigs till dey run ’em plunk-clunk right into de mud hole, an’ dar dey all is, head down an’ dead down, smodered, wid on’y deir little curly tailses a-stickin’ out. Dat’s de nex’ ting, but de ting afore dat is dis way. De

man he'll say—"Why didn' you pull 'em out?" An' you'll say you tried to an' come mighty near bein' smoder yourse'f. Den he'll say—"Where's de mud on you?" An'—well, dere you is, where is dat mud?' ses Ou' Jackalse, an' he look mighty business like.

“Den I hatto daub myself wid mud?’ ses Ou' Wolf, like he's tinkin' weder he will or not.

“Daub yourse'f?’ ses Ou' Jackalse. ‘Daub ain't no sort o' word for it. You's fair got to roll in it, an' squirm in it, till you look like you come so near bein' smodered dat dere wahnt no fun in it at all. But I'll he'p you,’ ses he. ‘Here you is now, an' over you goes,’ an' 'fore Ou' Wolf knows what's a-happenin', Ou' Jackalse lands in his ribs, biff! head first an' wollop he go, smack into de mud.

“Wid Ou' Wolf bein' tuk so s'prise' like dat he had his mouf open an' shoutin' when he hit de mud, an' his years an' his eyes open, an' he squash 'em all so full o' mud, inside an' out, dat he tink he surely is a goner. An' Ou' Jackalse he yust lie down on de bank an' flop wid laughin', an' he feel dat good he 'gin to lam more mud at Ou' Wolf where he's a-diggin' hisse'f out.

“Den Ou' Wolf, gets out at last, an' he stand an' try to scrape de mud ouden his eyes till he can look at Ou' Jackalse. But Ou' Jackalse he look at him like it was a hawse he was a-buyin'. ‘Dat's about it,’ ses he. ‘You's yust about right now. De man'll see right off dat you done all you could to save dem pigs, an' he'll gi'e you sometin' for it. You's about de mise'blest looking ting

in de veldt yust now, but you's about de usefulest chummy ever was.'

“‘Oh, I is, is I?’ ses Ou' Wolf, an' he don't know weder he's a-gun' to fight or on'y use some words. But de mud in his tummy make him feel dat sick he don't do one nor toder. He on'y ses —‘An' what's you goin' to do all dis time?’

“‘Oh, while you's gone I takes de pigses an' I lights out for de kraal at you' house. Den when you comes an' finds me dere well have meat; all de meat we want. An' dat's what'll cure you; you tink o' dat now,’ ses he.

“‘Ou' Wolf he tunk. ‘Well, a'right dis time,’ ses he, an' off he snake hisse'f, for he was dat t'ick an heavy wid de mud he cahnt trot at all.

“‘Well, he comes to de man, an' he tell him how de pigs is smodered, an' de man comes back wid him to have a look. He looks at de mud hole, an' at all de little curly tails a-stickin' up, an' den he look at Ou' Wolf. ‘You's sure de pigs is smoder' in dere?’ ses he.

“‘Dere's deir little curly tails a-stickin' out,’ ses Ou' Wolf. ‘Dey's all down under dere, head firs'.’

“Well,’ ses de man, ‘dat’s mighty funny now; ’cause yestiday I rode troo dat mud hole an’ it wahnt knee deep.’ An’ den he make a grab for a tail, an’ dar it is in his han’, clean cut off.

“Ou’ Wolf he tink it’s about time to be slantin’ out o’ dat, but he ha’n’t made de second stride afore de man had him. ‘Deir little curly tails is a-stickin’ out, is dey?’ ses he, an bash he biffs him in de ribs. ‘De wilde-honde chase ’em into de mud, did dey?’ an’ he yust mash de wind outen him. ‘Dey’s smoder’, is dey?’ ses he, an’ he grabs Ou’ Wolf up in de air an’ lam him down on de ground, an’ den he fair wipe up de scenery wid him. Den he left what was left an’ went off back to de house.

“Well, ahter a while Ou’ Wolf he scrape up what dere is of him, an’ he slant out for home, mighty slow an’ mighty sorry, on’y he tink, well, he’s a-gun’ to get dat meat now to cure hisse’f wid, as soon as he gets to de kraal an’ de pigs.

“But he gets to de kraal an’ he don’t get to de pigs, ’cause de pigs ain’t dere, an’ dere ain’t no sign of Ou’ Jackalse needer. ‘Dat’s funny,’ ses he. Den he sit down to wait, an’ he wait till it drop dark, an’ still dere ain’t no Jackalse an’ no pigses. ‘If he don’t come ’fore long,’ ses Ou’ Wolf, an he grines his teef.

“But long or short Ou’ Jackalse didn’t come—dat night nor de next mawnin’. An’ what’s mo’,” ended Old Hendrik, “he ain’t never come dere yet. But f’m dat day to dis he’s al’ays had plenty

lard in his house to keep his nose well greased. I don't say how he has it, but he has it—dat's all.”

When Ou' Wolf built his House

It was a day or two afterwards before the children caught Old Hendrik in the mood again. But sweet dumplings to dinner, with cinnamon sauce, had mellowed him this day, and they were quick to see it.

“But how did Ou' Wolf an' Ou' Jackalse first fall out, Ou' Ta'?” demanded the eldest boy.

“Dere never was no first fall out,” answered the old Hottentot with a sly grin, shifting his seat under the old mimosa to get the best of its shade before beginning. “Dere didn't need to be no first: it yust come natural. Ou' jackalse yust couldn't he'p hisse'f. Dar was Ou' Wolf; all de time so quiet, an' all de time a-workin' an' a-doin' sometin' for hisse'f. An' den dere was Ou' Jackalse; all de time so slim, an' all de time never a-workin' nor a-doin' anytin' 'cept to get out o' workin' an' doin' sometin' for hisse'f. Ou' Wolf he'd go a-huntin' for what he had to get; an' Ou' Jackalse he'd sit an' bake in de sun an' plan skellum for what he want to get. Natchally dey was al'ays fall out f'm de beginnin': dere wahnt no oder way to it.

“Look now, dat time when Ou' Wolf build his house—look what happen den. Dar was Ou' Wolf all jump-an'-ginger to get Missus Wolf married to him. But he cahnt get married till he build his house to put her in. So dere he was a-workin' away at darie house, yust so set to finis' it 'fore de

time's up dat he don't har'ly gi'e hisse'f time to hunt enough to eat. He don't take but mighty little to breakfas', an' ahter breakfas' he yust slap de rest o' de meat an' de bones into de pot to be cookin', ready agen dinner-time, while he's a-workin' away like crazy.

“Well, he gets to t'atchin' away, an' along comes Ou' Jackalse, an' he smell darie stew in de pot, an' 'fore you can wink he's on to it an' a-holdin' up dat lid. ‘Allah man!’ ses he, ‘dat do smell good.’

“Ou' Wolf up on de roof-poles hears darie lid a-lifitin', an' he look round yust in time. You should a-hear him shout, ‘Ho, yeh! What for yeh lookin' in darie pot?’ ses he, an' he grabs his two hands on de beam, an' sets one foot on it, as if he was yust a-comin' down in one yump, flop on Ou' Jackalse chest.

“‘Mawnin'! Oom Wolf,’ ses Ou' Jackalse, yust as s'prise' an' cheerful as sun-up. ‘Glad it's you. I been a-wantin' some breakfas' yust so bad dat my tummy tinks my troat's cut.’

“‘Ho! you wants some breakfas', does you?’ ses Ou' Wolf, mighty snifty. ‘Well, you yust keep on a-wantin'. Dere ain't no breakfas' here for nob'dy. Dere's yust one dinner an' dat's for me. Darie meat in darie pot's it. I hain't no time to go a-huntin' for oder folks eatin': I got sometin' else to do,’ ses he.

“Ou’ Jackalse he put dat lid back mighty slow an’ mighty sorry (like a little boy I knows when his mammy makes him put down de sugar pot at breakfas’), an’ all de time he’s watchin’ Ou’ Wolf out o’ de corner of his eye to see if he’s reg’lar raingin’ mad about it or not. But Ou’ Wolf reg’lar is.

“Ou’ Jackalse he ’gun to tink p’r’aps he ain’t a-gun’ to get darie breakfas’ so much ahter all. Den he sniff de smell agen, an’ it ain’t no manner o’ use—four men an’ a dog couldn’t a-druv him away f’ m dat smell; he yust ha’ to have dat breakfas’.

““So yeh’s got sometin’ else to do, has yeh?” ses he den, a sort o’ slow an’ hurt like. ‘You mustto, I should say; an’ it must be sometin’ mighty busy to make you so snarley like dat when an ole friend like me t’ought you’d like him to take a bite o’ breakfas’ wid you.’

“Ou’ Wolf he feel mighty mean, but den he tink on Missus Wolf, an’ it ain’t no use; he yust ha’ to get dat house finis’. ‘I cahnt he’p it,’ ses he, stiff an’ hairy. ‘Dis yere house gotto be finis’. I hain’t no time to be a-huntin’ my dinner when dinner-time come. ’Sides, I’ll be too ’ungry.’

““Well,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, shakin’ his head as if he wouldn’ ha’ b’lieved it of Ou’ Wolf if he ha’n’t a-seen it. ‘Well, if you feel like dat it must be sometin’ pretty bad. What’s you in such a Allah Crachty hurry to finis’ dis house for anyhow?’ ses he. ‘Ou’ Wolf he don’t like to let it out, but he ha’ to say sometin’ to ’scuse hisse’f.’ He outs wid it. ‘Goin’ to get married,’ ses he, sharp

an' spiky. 'Dat's what.'

“‘Oh, dat's it, is it?’ ses Ou' Jackalse sort o' brightenin' up an half a-laughin' all at once. ‘Well, dat is sometin' to be a bit hairy about. If dat's it, why I ain't got nawtin' more to say about it, but on'y yust to turn to an' he'p you straightaway. If you's goin' to be married, den we's yust gotto get dis house finis',’ ses he, an' he brace up an' look as if he's gettin' a mighty fine speech off'n his chest.

“‘But Ou' Wolf he 'members Ou' Jackalse, an' he don't b'lieve in no sich a fine offer. ‘'Tain't no good,’ ses he. ‘Dat's my dinner, an' it ain't a-gun' to be nob'dy's breakfas'.’

“‘But you cahnt insult Ou' Jackalse nohow while he's a-smellin' dat smell. ‘It ain't a-gun' to be my breakfas' nohow,’ ses he, mighty brisk and pleasant like. ‘I yust wouldn' have it—now I knows what's de matter—not if you wanted me to. You'll want you' dinner pretty bad when de time comes—a lot mo' dan I shall’ (an' here Ou' Jackalse sort o' skip his back leg out an' wink at it), ‘so I'm yust a-gun' to lend you a hand to get finis',’ an' he offs wid his coat an' chucks it down. ‘Look out for me,’ ses he. ‘I's a-comin' up to dat t'atchin'.’

“‘Well, Ou' Wolf he don't know what to say. He feel dat mean he wish Ou' Jackalse 'ud slip an' break his neck comin' up. But Ou' Jackalse he ain't a slippin' while he ain't had dat meat yet outen darie pot, an' he comes up yust as chirpy as a finch in a peach tree. ‘Why, we'll ha' dis

job finis' in no time,' ses he, an' he smack Ou' Wolf on his back atween de shoulders dat hearty he jarred de frown right off'n his face.

“You's too slow to shift you' own shadda. See me now. I'll lay de t'atch on dis lower row an' you work on up to de top f'm dat,' ses Ou' Jackalse, as he slam one bundle o' reeds at Ou' Wolf an' hitch anoder under his own leg on de rafter where he's a-straddlin'. ‘You's worse dan Ou' Miss Kuraan for stan'in' an' yaw, yaw, yawin',’ ses he.

“Well, Ou' Wolf he cahnt yust feel like he's a-likin' it at all; he's knowed Ou' Jackalse too long for dat; but yet he cahnt yust see his way outen it needer. De longer dey work, de harder he get to studyin' yust what Ou' Jackalse is a-meanin'; an' he tink so much an' he tink so deep dat he clean forgot to watch yust what Ou' Jackalse is a-doin'.

“An' what was Ou' Jackalse a-doin' all de time, ses you? Why now, what would darie ou' skellum be a-doin' but doin' skellum. First string o' t'atch he lay along de rafters he's mighty cheerful an' mighty busy. Second string he lay along an' you can see all de cheerful drop outen his face an' see de grin begin to run an' flicker where de cheerful was before. De t'ird string he lay an' de fun begun to sheet in his eyes like de dry lightnin' on a summer night, an' he yust couldn't hold in no longer. He ketch hold o' de roots of his tail an' he fair whizz it round and round till he almos' make it hum, he feel dat full o' laughin' inside him. An' all dis time Ou' Wolf yust had his back to him, a-studyin' an' a-won'erin' what mischief make Ou' Jackalse

want to he'p him. But he don't like to look round to watch somehow.

“Den de fourt' string Ou' Jackalse lay he work as quiet an' as slim as if he's a-stealin' it; an' de ting dat it's in his mind to do, dat's de time he's doin' it? Ou' Wolf he's still a-studyin' an' he keep on still a-studyin', till in about one jiff he hear darie pot lid a-liftin' agen, an de smell comes up dat good an' t'ick he can taste it.

“He swip his head round, an' dere was Ou' Jackalse wid de lid up an' his nose a-workin' an' a-sniffin' in de steam Didn' Ou' Wolf shout den. ‘Ho, yeh! How com' yeh at darie dinner again?’

“Ou' Jackalse he cock one year up to hear, an' he cock one eye up to see. ‘Oh, dat's all right,’ ses he, quite comfy. ‘Dis ain't dat pot at all. Dis ain't no dinner; dis is yust a breakfas'. You ain't got no shout in dis at all.’

“Ou' Wolf he don't say not a word, but he yust make one flyin' yump to land right fair on Ou' Jackalse neck.

“But he don't land. 'Stead o' dat he tink he's yumped right troo hisse'f an turned hisse'f inside out. Anyway, he knows he finds hisse'f hangin' down, head first, between de rafters, a-scratchin' an' a-fratchin' in de air. When Ou' Jackalse t'atch dat fourt' string he t'atch Ou' Wolf's tail fast in wid it, an' dere's Ou' Wolf now a-hangin' by dat tail, head down an' fightin',

an' he cahnt get back nohow.

“An' don't he shout! ‘Le' me down out o' dis,’ ses he. ‘You hear me now! Le' me down or I'll bang de stuffin' out o' you!’

“Ou' Jackalse he smile quite s'prise' like. ‘What you want down out o' dat for anyhow?’ ses he, spearin' out a piece o' meat f'm de pot—an' ho! but you ought to seen him lick his lips. ‘Dis cahnt be nawtin' to do wi' you nohow. Yours is a dinner, ses you, an' dis is a breakfas', you can see dat you'se'f, 'cause I's a-eatin' it an' it's breakfas' time.’ An' he gullups down de meat off'n half a dozen bones.

“‘Le' me down now!’ yells Ou' Wolf, gettin' black in de face. ‘I'll yust show you weder dat's a breakfas' or a dinner. I'll teach you weder it's mine or not!’

“‘Now you look-a'-me, Oom Wolf,’ ses Ou' Jackalse, his eyes a-twinklin' fresh as he swipe down de last meat off'n de first rib. ‘I'll tell you what I'll do; I'll divide wid yeh—dat's fair enough. So here you is for your share,’ an' he lams de clean bone at Ou' Wolf an' catches him a hummer on de jaw.

“Ou' Wolf he fair lets out at dat; big words; words what make you' years stand on end. An' all de time Ou' Jackalse keep on a-dippin' an' a-spearin' in de pot, an' a-tellin' Ou' Wolf what a

clinkin' fine piece o' meat he's pullin' out, an' how nice it taste, an' how he hope Ou' Wolf 'll fin' his dinner yust as nice when de time come—"Cause you said yust now you has your dinner in a pot som'eres round here, didn' yeh?" ses he, an' he lams him wid anoder bone, biff!

"Den de last meat was eat an' de last bone t'rown, an' Ou' Jackalse he come wid a long reed an' he gun' to tickle Ou' Wolf on de end of his nose where he's a-hangin'. But Ou' Wolf he's in dat rage he yust snap an' yap at darie reed till all de frame o' de house begin to shake, an' Ou' Jackalse he tink it's about time to get f'm under. An' dere ain't no more to stop for anyhow—he might as well keep on a-movin'. So he did.

"Well, Ou' Wolf he's yust dat mad he won't shout Ou' Jackalse back to let him down an' dey'll say no more about it. Not him; he'll yust hang an' rattle an' see him blowed first. But young Missus Wolf—well, you 'members dey wahnt married yet till de house 'ud be finis', an' I s'pose somehow she couldn't he'p herse'f, but she yust hatto sa'nter past in de trees, an' sort o' peep an' see how de house is a-gettin' on. An' dere she seen Ou' Wolf a-hangin', head down, an' black in de face.

"Sich a scrick she got, an' sich a scream she let out! an' in about two ticks she was inside darie house frame to hold him up. She cahnt reach his head de fust time, but de second time she yump so high she ketch him by de years, an' dere she is, a-hangin' down f'm him—to hold him up! An' Ou' Wolf he's dat much gone on her he don't like to say nawtin' about it—but he feel

his tail like comin' out by de roots.

“At last ses he—‘You’d better go up on de roof an’ make loose my tail. I’ll p’r’aps get down quicker dat way,’ ses he.

“As soon as she hear him speak—‘Oh, he ain’t dead yet, he’s alive yet,’ ses she. An’ she’s yust dat glad she fair hangs an’ swings agen, till Ou’ Wolf hatto say sometin’. ‘But my tail ain’t a-gun’ to last much more,’ ses he.

“Dat sort o’ cut into her sense a bit, an’ she stop an’ look. ‘Oh, dat’s it, is it?’ ses she, an’ she looks as if dat ain’t no great shakes to be de matter wid him. ‘If you’d yust go up an’ make it loose?’ ses he.

“‘Hump!’ ses she, but she cahnt say no more yust yet, an’ so up she go. But when she get up on de roof an’ see how fast his tail is t’atched in wid de rest, it kind o’ strike her to won’er how de jimminy his tail come like dat, an’ she hadn’t more’n begun to un-t’atch it ’fore she begin to ax him how come it so.

“Ou’ Wolf he ain’t in no Allah Crachty hurry to tell her all about it, but he ain’t no good at tellin’ you-know-whats. So what he hatto do he yust up an’ did, an’ he told her de hull tale plump.

“Now p’r’aps she tinks a lot of Ou’ Wolf, an’ agen p’r’aps she tinks more about bein’ goin’ to get married an’ have a house o’ her own to boss in. But anyhow she tinks a lot de most o’ herse’f, an’ she gets dat mad wid him for bein’ had so silly dat she cahnt stand it nohow. She yust stop unt’atchin’, an’ she fair slam herse’f half way down troo de rafters to reach him an’ biff him a one-two in de ribses. ‘Take dat!’ ses she, ‘an’ dat! for bein’ sich a fathead!’

“‘Ouk! Ouk!’ Ou’ Wolf he yell, an’ he make sich a kick an’ sich a fluster to get out o’ reach, dat fust ting you know de t’atch won’t hold no longer an’ it come loose an’ let him down wollop! fair on his head. But Missus Wolf she’s yust dat mad-an’-ginger dat she try to grab him an’ hold him up f’m droppin’ till she can biff him agen; an’ she grab yust too far an’ miss her reach, an’ down she come as well, head fust too, biff into his tummy, an’ knock de wind clean outen him.

“Atween his head an’ his tummy Ou’ Wolf he tink he’s fair about dyin’, but in yust two ticks Missus Wolf was up an’ a-lammin’ into him. Den he knowed yust how dead he ain’t, for he yumps up wid a howl an’ a howler, an’ he fair streak it out o’ dat into de vach-a-bikkie bushes till he could lost her. He sit down dere, but he cahnt tink for feelin’, an’ he cahnt rub his head for tinkin’ on his tummy, nor rub his tummy for tinkin’ on his head.

“But he lay it all up to Ou’ Jackalse. ‘Yust wait till I get a fair ole chance,’ ses he, ‘den see if I don’t get so even wid him it’ll stick out de oder side. Dat’s all.’

“Well, it went on like dis till one day Ou’ Wolf was a-raungin’ along, an’ who should he see alongside de road but Ou’ Jackalse, a-sittin’ an’ a-polishin’ off de last piece o’ biltong outen a bag; nice, fat, buck-biltong.

“Now I’s got him! See me if I don’t do sometin’ now,’ ses Ou’ Wolf, an’ he sits him down for a minute to see what’s de best way to do it.

“But Ou’ Jackalse had seen him long ago a’ready, an’ he don’t hatto sit down an’ study how he’s goin’ to do. He knows it an’ he does it. He don’t wait to be yumped. He yust gets straight up and skips over to Ou’ Wolf, like as if he ain’t seen him for he don’t know how long, an’ he never was so glad. ‘Here you is,’ ses he ‘Yust de very one an’ yust in time. Here, taste dat,’ ses he an’ he offers him de last little piece o’ de biltong. ‘I owes you a good breakfas’, an’ now I’s a-gun’ to pay you half a dozen for it.’

“Ou’ Wolf he don’t know. He’s mighty s’picious of Ou’ Jackalse any time you like, an’ worse when he’s a-offerin’ good turns. He draws back a bit. But dat biltong it look so red an’ sweet in de middle, where it’s cut across, an’ Ou’ Jackalse is a-lickin’ his lips wid such a smacks, dat Ou’ Wolf he take dat little piece an’ he wolf it down.

“Dat piece taste yust so good he cahnt he’p it—he’s gotto ha’ some more. ‘Where’s dere more o’ dat?’ ses he. ‘Tell me quick till I gets at it.’

“Ou’ Jackalse smile. ‘Well,’ ses he, ‘I’ve a-eat dat much dat I cahnt run fast enough myse’f. If I hadn’t a-done I’d a-gone wid you. But it don’t matter anyhow—it’s yust too easy for troublin’ about.’

“‘Ne’er min’ dat. Where’s it?’ ses Ou’ Wolf, short an’ sharp.

“‘On de road dere,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse. ‘On dat road you sees de spoor of a waggon dat’s went along not so long since. All you has to do is to run a bit wide an’ get ahead o’ dat waggon. Den you lie down in de road an’ make like you’s dead—too dead for skinnin’ in a hurry. De waggon’ll come along an’ de baas he’ll see you, an’ he’ll say—“Hello! here’s a dead wolf. His skin’ll make a fine mat for my wife. I’ll take him home an’ skin him.”’

“‘Den he’ll pick you up an chuck you on de waggon, an’ dere’s where all de biltong is—sacks an’ sacks of it. All you has to do is to wait a bit till de man ain’t a-lookin’, an’ den, flip!—you drops a sack o’ de nicest biltong out an’ slips off ahter it you’s’e’f. I on’y wish I had room for mo’,’ ses he, an’ he rubs his tummy like he’s fair a-longin’.

“Ou’ Wolf he look at Ou’ Jackalse an’ he tink what he was intendin’ o’ doin’. But de taste o’ dat biltong yust make his mouf run, an’ he cahnt wait. ‘Is dat de way you got yours?’ ses he, sharp an’ hairy.

“‘Dat’s de hull way,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse; ‘an’ I’s a laughin’ yet to tink on it—it’s so easy.’

“Ou’ Wolf he don’t want to seem like he’s too soft a-b’lievin’, but de biltong make him fair yammer for more. ‘Well,’ ses he, ‘we’ll see,’ an’ off he sets to come round darie waggon.

“By’n’by he gets ahead, an’ den he cuts into de road an’ lies down, an’ makes yust de same as if he’s dead.

“De waggon comes along, an’ de man he see Ou’ Wolf a-lyin’ like dead in de road. ‘Hello!’ ses he, fair a-bristlin’, ‘here’s anoder on ’em, is dere? On’y toder one was a yackalse. An’ dis ’un’s goin’ to get chucked into de waggon too, is he, an’ steal anoder sack o’ biltong as well? But we’ll yust see about dat, we will. Here’s you!’ ses he, an’ he fair yump right square on Ou’ Wolf’s ribs—wallop!

“‘Wou-uk!’ yells Ou’ Wolf, an’ he try to up an’ run for it.

“‘So, you’re anoder, is you?’ shouts de man, an’ wallop he yumps on him agen.

“‘I didn’t. Le’ me go,’ yells Ou’ Wolf at dat.

“Steal anoder sack, will you!’ shouts de man, an’—wop!—he yumps on him some more.

“But Ou’ Wolf’s yust about had enough. If he don’t get out o’ dat immeejitly, if not sooner, den he’s goin’ to be deader dan he shammed a minute since. ’Fore you can say knife! he yust scratched up an’ away an’ light out for de oder side o’ de sky line, wid de man a-peltin’ him wid a stone for every stride. ‘P’r’aps you’ll come agen,’ ses de man.

“When Ou’ Wolf manage to crawl to de ridge he look back, an’ he sees de man a-whackin’ de whip into his team an’ shoutin’ like he feels right good an’ sa’cy. ‘Allah Crachty! look-a’-dat now,’ ses Ou’ Wolf to hisse’f, but he don’t rub no spot ’cause he cahnt make up his mind which is de sorest.

“Den he look along de ridge an’ dere he see Ou’ Jackalse, yust a-hoppin’ an’ a-rollin’ wid laughin’. Ou’ Wolf he look an’ Ou’ Wolf he tink. But Ou’ Wolf he’s still a-feelin’ too, an he fair flop down an’ say nothin’. Dere wahnt anytin’ else to say. But he shake his head: I tell you he shake his head,” ended Old Hendrik, shaking his own head with the word.

Old Wolf Lays A Trap

The little girl was in a great way for a day or two at the immunity of the rascal Jackal in his dealings with Old Wolf. “But, Ou’ Ta’,” demanded she at last, “did Ou’ Wolf never pay off Ou’ Jackalse for his skellum tricks?”

“Well,” answered Old Hendrik, taking a fresh piece of sugar cane from under his arm and biting a good two inches off it as he began, sitting by the barn end, “dere was one time when he come so near it he would a-got square if it hadn’t a-bin Ou’ Jackalse. It look one time like Ou’ Jackalse was a-goner, but bein’ it was him, why o’ cou’s—

“It come like dis. Ahter Ou’ Wolf was new married, his missus she kep’ on a-yawin’ about how he’d let Ou’ Jackalse t’atch his tail fast, an’ steal his dinner, an’ biff him wid bones, an’ let him in for a bashin’ f’m de man wid de biltong waggon, till Ou’ Wolf he ’gin to be mighty glad he hadn’t tol’ her about all de rest o’ de times Ou’ Jackalse done him down. But all de same it seem like he ain’t save’ much by not tellin’ her, for de ting she did know seem like it’s quite enough to keep her goin’ all day an’ every day, an double span on Sunday. If she’d a-knowed more she couldn’t ha’ yawed more, ’cause dere ain’t but sev’n days in de week to yaw in when you’ve done your best. Ou’ Wolf couldn’t stan’ no more. He yust sneaked out an’ off.

“Well, he see it stickin’ out pretty plain dat he’ll hatto get square wid darie Ou’ Jackalse or he’ll

hatto leave home—one or toder. But for de life o' him he cahnt yust make up his mind what's de best way to do it, an' he tink dat hard as he go along, and he tink dat close as he stride along, dat fust ting he know he find hisse'f walkin' plump onto Ou' Jackalse's house. He yust wake up in time to sit down sudden behin' a bush till he see weder Ou' Jackalse is at home or not.

“Pretty soon he's pretty sure Ou' Jackalse ain't at home. In de fust place dere ain't no smoke, an' nex' place de door's shut fas' an' de window hole is bung up tight wid a vach-a-bikkie bush. ‘Dis is yust my chance at las’,’ ses Ou' Wolf to hisse'f. ‘Dis is de time I's a-gun' to get even wid darie ou' skellum. I'll yust go inside dere an' get behind de door till he comes in. Den—well den—won't I bash him I'll feel good, I will, when I biffs him. He won't; dere won't be no more'n a big mess left of him: yust a grease spot to swear by.’

“Well, Ou' Wolf he shamber over an' sneak into de house an' hide hisse'f behind de door, an' he hadn't more'n fit hisse'f into de cohner dan here comes Ou' Jackalse home agen.

“But Ou' Jackalse he ain't de sort to walk into no place foolish unless dere's sometin' extray on. ‘Stead o' goin' straight up an' steppin' right in, he circle roun' outside de house to see if it's all serene fust an same's he left it. He hadn't gone half way roun' 'fore he plump right on de spoor of Ou' Wolf an' dere he stop. ‘Dat ain't my spoor,’ ses he, cockin' his years all roun'. ‘Dat's Ou' Wolf ben here. P'r'aps he's inside my house, hey?’

“Well, he study an’ he won’er an’ den at last he stroke his nose. ‘I know what I’ll do,’ ses he. ‘I’ll ax my house if dere’s anybody inside.’

“Den he call out, slow an’ cunnin’: ‘My ole house! My ole house!’ An’ he waits an’ dere ain’t no answer.

“He call agen: ‘My ole house! My ole house!’ an’ agen dere ain’t no answer.

“Dis time he winks an’ he change de call. ‘My ole house! I know Ou’ Wolf’s inside you, else you’d say, “Come in,” like you al’ays does.’ Den he laugh till you could hear him right troo de trees.

“Ou’ Wolf behind de door he hear every word, an’ he hear dat laugh besides. ‘Now,’ ses he to hisse’f, ‘if I calls out “Come in,” he’ll tink it’s his ole house a-callin’ an’ he’ll step right in Ou’ Jackalse ain’t so smart as he reckon dis time, else he wouldn’t ha’ tol’ de words for de house to say.’ Den he try to make his voice soft an’ wheedlin’, while he call out high an’ cunnin’, ‘Co-o-me in!’

“Ou’ Jackalse he let out a great big laugh fit to split, an’ he lam stones at de door till it rattle agen. ‘Come out o’ dat, ole fathead! Tink I cahnt tell your voice? ’Sides, dere’s you’ tail, wid de hairs a-stickin’ out troo de cracks.’

“Ou’ Wolf he’s dat mad at bein’ had agen so cheap an’ nasty he yust swang de door open, an’ at fust he tink he’ll chase Ou’ Jackalse till he plum runs him down. But Ou’ Jackalse he go two licks for his one, an’ every once in a while he kick out his back foot to rile him up mo’. Ou’ Wolf yust hatto go home an’ tink it all over agen.

“Well, dis sort o’ ting go on an’ on till at last Ou’ Wolf he feel dat desprit he’ll hatto do sometin’ or bu’st. So off he sets for where de white owl lives, ’cause he ’members why de white owl on’y fly at night time, an’ he’s pretty sure Ole Owl’s a-gun’ to he’p him.

“De white owl listen to what Ou’ Wolf tell him, an’ he look so straight at Ou’ Wolf dat you’d tink his eyes was fas’ to him. ‘Well,’ ses he at last, ‘Ou’ Jackalse is mighty slim, but Tink Tinkey was slimmer when de birds was choosin’ a king. An’ Young Tinkey’s de littlest bird in de veldt. I’s a deal bigger’n Tinkey, an’ we’ll see if I cahnt beat Ou’ Jackalse worse dan him. So here’s what you do.

““You know where de leopard live, in de kloof on de yonder side de berg? Now she’s yust got four little cubs, an’ she fin’s it mighty hard scratchin’ to get scoff enough Well, tomorrow you comes home past Ou’ Jackalse’s house, as if you was comin’ from dat kloof, an’ you have some honey a-runnin’ down your yaws an’ a-drippin’ on your paws, an’ you pass Ou’ Jackalse where he’s a-sittin’ in de sun’ at his house end. But you don’t say good mawnin’ nor nawtin’—you yust goes on home.

“Nex’ day you does de same agen, an’ dat time he’s mighty sure to say good mawnin’, ’cause he’ll a-bin tinkin’ an’ studyin’ about dat honey ever since yestiday. But you don’t say not a word agen—you yust goes on home.

“Den de nex’ day once mo’, an’ dat day you ses good mawnin’ when he ses it, an’ dat’ll be enough. Ahter dat he’s mighty sure to open out an’ wheedle an’ coax to get it out o’ you where you got dat honey. But you don’t tell him at fust; you yust gives him a leetle teenty piece o’ honey-comb, what you’s got wropped up in a green leaf. Dat’ll make him fair wild to get mo’, an’ den’s your chance.

“Ses you to him, p’r’aps you’ll take him to it if he promise to keep it quiet, an’ he’ll be dat stirred he’ll promise afo’e you’s done axin’. Den you take him along to de kloof, an’ in de kloof you take him along to de great big rock at de fur end, an’ under de rock you show him de leopard’s house. “Dere,” ses you, “in dere’s de honey;” an’ in he’ll pop. Den you rolls a big stone in de door an’ leaves him dere—de leopard ’ll do all de rest as soon as it come home.’

“Well, Ou’ Wolf feel sure dat’s a-gun’ to be all right. It soun’ so slim he tink it’s about all done a’ready except de laughin’. An he do most o’ dat, too, as he go off to start de business.

“Well, de fust day when Ou’ Wolf come past his house Ou’ Jackalse was a-sittin’ by de prickly pear in front an’ he don’t say a word. He yust looks over his shoulder to see if de door’s open so

he can pop inside an' bang it shut if Ou' Wolf make a dive for him. Den he notice de honey a-drippin' on Ou' Wolfs mouf an' his paws an' he beat his tail once on de groun' considerin'. But Ou' Wolf take no mo' notice dan if he was his own shadda on de wall.

“Nex' day when Ou' Jackalse see him a-comin' he 'gun to won'er. ‘Watto!’ ses he. ‘Here's Ou' Wolf agen, an' de honey drippin' off'n him worse'n yestiday. Dat's a bit funny.’

“‘Stead o' lookin' at de door dis time he speak out. ‘Mawnin', Oom Wolf,’ ses he.

“Ou' Wolf he don't turn his head no mo' 'n if it was meer-cats. He keep straight on an' he lick his lips, smack! smack! till Ou' Jackalse he fair hump his back wid wantin' some o' dat honey.

“De day ahter dat, when Ou' Wolf come past, Ou' Jackalse was a-waitin' ready, an' as soon as he see de honey a-drippin' he sort o' sa'nter over close. ‘Mawnin', Oom Wolf,’ ses he, ‘fine rains we bin a-havin'. Dere's a Koodoo wid a calf de yonder side de spruit. Don't you think we might get de calf if we all two goes togeder?’

“Ou' Wolf stop at dat as if he's sort o' considerin'. ‘No,’ ses he; ‘I ain't so dead gone on Koodoo meat dese days nohow. I's dat full o' honey I ain't a-itchin' for anytin' else.’

“Ou’ Jackalse tongue begin to run. ‘Do you tink dat honey mightn’t be bad?’ ses he. ‘It look mighty dark.’

“‘Oh, it’s de dark sort,’ ses Ou’ Wolf, an’ he lick his chops till Ou’ Jackalse cahnt stan’ it. He yust come right up an’ ketch a drop as it drip down.

“Dat set him a-twitchin’ for mo’. ‘Oom Wolf,’ ses he, ‘ain’t you goin’ to gi’e me yust a leetle teenty bittie honey now? Ole chummies like us two, you know.’

“Ou’ Wolf he sort o’ consider dat. ‘Well,’ ses he, ‘I wouldn’t mind doin’ it, but I’s on’y got one piece lef; a piece I’s a-takin’ home to my missus.’

“‘Your missus!’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, sort o’ pityin’ like. ‘Well, if you does dat sort o’ ting, why’— an’ he shake his head like he’s pretty sorry for a man dat’s come down to dat. ‘But anyhow,’ ses he, ‘your wife don’t know you got dis honey, so it won’t matter if you does gi’e it me. What she don’t know about she cahnt trouble about. You can gi’e me it an’ she won’t never know.’

“‘Oh, but she knows I went to get some,’ ses Ou’ Wolf, as if he’d like to do it but darsn’t.

“‘Tell her some’dy else is been dere afo’ you an’ scrape’ it all away,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse. ‘She

won't know but what it's true.'

“Well,’ ses Ou’ Wolf, ‘I might do dat—dough I ’spects I’ll be sorry for it. Here it is den,’ an’ he unwrops de leetle piece o’ honeycomb.

“In yust one bite Ou’ Jackalse take it in, an’ den dat set him on prickles to get a reg’lar feed of it. ‘Allah man!’ ses he, ‘dat’s good. Whar you get it?’

“Oh! long way off,’ ses Ou’ Wolf. ‘Too fur to carry it home; so I goes an’ has a feed as much as I can hol’ every day. Dere’s such lots of it.’

“Lots of it,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse ahter him, fair squirmin’. ‘Couldn’t we yust go back dere now, an’ I’d take a calabas an’ fetch a calabasful back for you to take to your missus? Dat’d do all right den.’

“Ou’ Wolf he shake his head an’ draw back a bit.

“Well,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, ‘you’d a-better do it now. Your missus’ll see where it’s dripped on you, an’ she’ll smell it anyhow, an’ den she ain’t a-gun’ to b’lieve you nohow—you knows dat. You’d better come now an’ le’ me carry a calabasful back for her.’

“Ou’ Wolf seem like dat strike him new. ‘Well,’ ses he, ‘p’r’aps I’d better. But no shenanigin now. If I takes you to dis yere place you’ll hatto carry two calabasies back, not one.’

“‘Is dere all dat honey den?’ ses Ou’ Jackalse. ‘Allah Crachty! yust hol’ on an’ I’ll get de two calabasies dis minute an’ show you,’ an’ off he darts into his house an’ out agen wid two o’ de biggest sort o’ nice new calabasies. ‘Here’s ’um, come on,’ ses he. But he wink to hisse’f, an’ he ses to hisse’f, ‘If I carry dat honey back I know who’ll eat it too.’

“Ou’ Wolf he make like he’s mighty onwillin’, an’ he on’y go ’cause he’s feared of his missus. An’ all de way Ou’ Jackalse is a-tellin’ him where dey’ll hunt togeder nex’ day, an’ nex’ week; an’ where dere’s a-gun’ to be some fine water-millions ’fore long. An’ all de way Ou’ Wolf’s a-takin’ it all in an’ sayin’ he shouldn’ won’er if dere was.

“Well, dey come to de kloof an’ dey come to de rock, an’ dere was de house where de leopard live. ‘De honey’s in dere,’ ses Ou’ Wolf. ‘Right inside, an’ you turn up de bed an’ dere it is. An’ don’t forget dem two calabasful for my missus.’

“Ou’ Jackalse he laugh, an’ he dive right inside. He’ll see about dem two calabasies, he will. But he hadn’t mo’en got inside ’fore Ou’ Wolf spring about an’ roll a great big stone plump into de doorway. ‘Ho yeh, smarty!’ ses he. ‘Dis is de time you wahnt smart enough. You’ll be a’ right when de leopard comes home an’ finds you wid her cubs. You’d carry me two calabasies

full o' honey, hey? Lots o' honey I'd trust you wid, wouldn't I?'

“Ou' Jackalse hear de stone a-rollin' in an' he make a dive to get out agen, but he on'y bang his head—bang stars outen it. Den he hear what Ou' Wolf say, an' he sniff an' sniff high. ‘I'll bet you b'lieved I was a-gun' to carry dat honey for you!’ ses he.

“‘An' I'll bet you tink I should ha' trusted you if dere'd bin honey here!’ ses Ou' Wolf.

“‘An' I know you tink all de time I b'lieved dere was honey here!’ sniffs Ou' Jackalse. ‘I know dere'd be no honey, or you wouldn't ha' showed me. But I knowed dere'd be sometin'—an' dere is. Dere's better eatin' still; dere's cubs.’

“‘An' dere's mo',’ ses Ou' Wolf; ‘dere's deir mammy. Dere's de leopard. An'—Allah Crachty, here she come!’

“You should ha' seen Ou' Wolf get out o' dat.

“De leopard come an' look, an' de leopard put its paw on de stone. ‘What's dis doin' here?’ ses it, an' it growl till it give Ou' Jackalse wits a scrick.

“He hatto do sometin’ an’ be sharp about it too. He speak up quick an’ lively. ‘I put dat stone dere. You better not to shift it. I see Ou’ Wolf a-smackin’ his lips, tinkin’ what a nice dinner he was goin’ to make off ’n your cubs. So I yust got inside an’ pull dis stone agin de door to keep him out an’ save your little cubickies. If you look you’ll see his spoor.’

“De leopard look, an’ sure enough dere’s Ou’ Wolfs spoor. ‘Allah man!’ ses it. ‘An’ so dat Ou’ Wolf want to get my cubs while I’s out a-huntin’, hey?’

“‘He is dat,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse inside. ‘An’ he reckon if he cahnt get ’em to-day he’ll do it anoder day. So you better to leave de stone dere an’ le’ me hand out your cubs troo de winda to be suckle’ an’ put back. Den I’ll watch ’em while you go huntin’ agen, an’ I’ll keep on like dat till dey’s big enough to see an’ go wid you a-huntin’.’

“‘Dere’s sense in dat,’ ses de leopard. ‘I’ll yust do dat. Hand me out de cubs.’

“So Ou’ Jackalse he hand out one cub, an’ when it’s had enough he take it back an’ hand out anoder; an’ he do dat way till all four bin out an’ feed. ‘Now you look ahter ’em agen till I come back,’ ses de leopard, an’ off it go agen.

“Ou’ Jackalse he sit down and look roun’. ‘Well,’ ses he, ‘dere never was no honey here, but dis dat’s here is near as sweet an’ a big lot better—dese’s cubs; fat cubs; juicy cubs. Ou’

Leopard would hatto pay me for nursin' 'em when I finis' anyhow, but I reckon it's better I draw my pay fust, den if you don't like de work you nee'nt to do it. Here's me has one o' dem cubs anyhow.'

“Well, he eat one cub, an' it eat dat sweet he tink by jimminy it'll take more dan one leopard to drive him out o' dat while dere's any cubs left. So dere he set an' he sing a song about de honey dat had hair on. Den de leopard come back an' ax, ‘Hello! how's my cubickies?’

“‘Yust fine,’ ses Ou' Jackalse—‘for eatin’.’

“‘What's dat?’ ses de leopard, tail a-wavin’.

“‘Well, deir eatin's drinkin’,’ ses Ou' Jackalse. ‘An' here's de first,’ ses he, handin' out one.

“Well, dey hands 'em out an' dey hands 'em in, an' dat's t'ree cubs. De leopard's a-waitin' for de fourt', an' dat's de one Ou' Jackalse cahnt hand out 'cause it's inside him. But he don't turn a hair; he yust wink to hisse'f an' hand out de first agen. ‘Extra dose for you,’ ses he when he take it in agen. ‘Extra yuice for me.’

“So when de leopard's gone a-huntin' agen Ou' Jackalse eat de cub what had de two drinks, an'

when de leopard come back he hands out de cubs, one, two, an' den number one agen for number t'ree, and number two for number four. An' he feel dat tickled wid hisse'f he stan' on his head inside dere. Den de leopard go huntin' agen, an' Ou' Jackalse eat anoder cub, an' when de leopard come back dere's on'y one lef. 'How's de cubickies?' ses de leopard.

“‘Fine,’ ses Ou' Jackalse. ‘Dey yust is fine!’ an' he wink to hisse'f. ‘On'y dere's one make like he ain't so well. But it'll be a' right ahter it's had a drink.’

“Den he pass out de one last cub, an' it take it's milk, an' de leopard hand it back. Den he pass it out agen an' it have anoder feed. Same way de nex' time, an' den de last time it's yust so full it cahnt drink no more, an' its little tummy's all swell out. ‘Dat's de one what ain't so well,’ ses Ou' Jackalse.

“‘It do look like it's a bit sickie,’ ses de leopard. ‘I wonder what's de matter wid it?’

“‘I tink dis stone stop up all de air,’ ses Ou' Jackalse. ‘You might yust pull it a little way back; not de hool way out, else Ou' Wolf might try to get in agen.’

“So de leopard pull out de stone a bit; not too far, but yust far enough for Ou' Jackalse to squeeze out if he want to. ‘Look ahter dat sick 'un,’ ses de leopard, an' off she go.

“Den Ou’ Jackalse scoff de last cub. ‘Allah man!’ ses he, ‘ain’t it a pity dey’s all done. An’ now I’ll ha’ to slant for home ’fore de leopard come an’ want to feed her cubs agen.’

“Den he squeeze hisse’f outside ready to go, an’ he hadn’t strid de fust stride ’fore he sees de leopard comin’ back. Dere he was, an’ dere’s de leopard comin’ for her cubs; but darie ou’ skellum he ain’t done yet. He let a yell outen him, an’ run an’ put his shoulder to de rock. ‘Make hurry! make haste,’ he shout ‘De rock’s a-fallin’ on your house. Come an’ he’p me hol’ it up! make hurry!’

“De leopard don’t stop to look, an’ de leopard don’t stop to tink. It hear Ou’ Jackalse yellin’, an’ it see him plank his shoulder to de rock, an’ strain an’ puff till his eyes stick out to hol’ up dat rock; an’ in yust about one tick dat leopard was dere too, wid his shoulder to de rock, scratchin’ an’ yammin’ to hol’ it up too.

“‘Hol’ it now till I run an’ get a prop,’ shouts Ou’ Jackalse, an’ de leopard he yust double hol’s while Ou’ Jackalse dive into de trees to look for de prop.

“But,” concluded the old Hottentot, with an impressive pause, “he ain’t got back wid dat prop yet.”

Old Jackalse Takes Old Wolf A Sheep Stealing

The children had been privately discussing for several days the state of things as between Ou' Jackalse and Ou' Wolf, and the verdict came out on this hot mid-day as they sat beside Old Hendrik under the big mimosa.

“Ou' Wolf was always such a big fool,” protested the eldest boy, with the wondrous contempt of his years; “such a fool to let that Ou' Jackal best him every time, like he did.”

“Well,” admitted Old Hendrik with a grin, “Ou' Wolf he might ha' look out a bit mo' p'r'aps, when he come near Ou' Jackalse. But den, I tell you, darie Ou' Jackalse is yust dat slim dere ain't no slimmer. If you want to keep ahead o' him you'd ha' to get up so early dere ain't no time to go to bed, an' den you'd on'y see his heel dust away yonder. Look dat time when Ou' Jackalse got Ou' Wolf into goin' a-sheep stealin' wid him. What 'ud you want mo' fairer dan dat look at de start? An' den what about de finis' of it?”

“Times is been a lot better many a time dan dey was den. De rinderpest was gone a' right enough, but de game was mighty sca'se yet, an' if Ou' Jackalse want to live on meat he hatto go mostly stalkin' roun' farmers' kraals for sheep. But him bein' doin' it on his lonesome he ain't had so much luck as he tink he'd like to have. One kraal specially he yust would like to get into, an' dere he tink he'd have de biggest feed of his life. It's a' right to get into it some night an' fill

hisse'f up to de eyes wid meat, but dere's de mawnin' after—dat's de trouble. De mawnin' after de man's a-goin' to find out what's happen', an' he'll get his dogs an' hunt for de one dat did it. An' Ou' Jackalse he's a-goin' to be too full o' feed to be hunted dat nex' mawnin'. Huntin' ain't a-goin' to agree wid him at all dat nex' day.

“But he wants dat feed, an' he don't want to get ketched—dat's two tings; an' he tink, an' he tink, an' study, but it all come back to de one ting; he'll yust hatto rope Ou' Wolf into de game if he's a-goin' to do it at all.

“Well, he raunge about, an' he dodge about till at last he see Ou' Wolf a-comin'. Den he turn his back to him an' make like he's a-slinkin' an' a-stalkin' ahter sometin'. Dat set Ou' Wolf a-wonderin', an' he sit down an' watch Ou' Jackalse a-stealin' an' a-feelin' troo de bushes till he's most out o' sight. ‘Tell you what,’ ses Ou' Wolf to hisse'f, ‘darie Ou' Jackalse is ahter sometin' good, I know. I's better watch him an' see if dere ain't sometin' in it for me too.’

“So up he get an' stalk on ahter Ou' Jackalse; an' Ou' Jackalse he don't let on but yust keeps on a-walkin' an' a-baulkin' till he comes to where he can see dat kraal he's a-wantin' at. Dere he get behind a big stone where Ou' Wolf ain't a-gun' to see him till he step out right alongside him.

“Ou' Wolf he keep on a-stalk an' a-stalkin', till all in a eye-open he find hisse'f rubbin' ribses

wid Ou' Jackalse, an' he's dat 'stonish dat he ketch his breaaf, an' he don't know de fust word to say.

“But Ou' Jackalse open on him wid de biggest wide-open smile. ‘Oh!’ ses he, ‘so dat's you, is it? An' you stalks me like dat, does you? By de jimminy, I al'ays did say you was about de slimmes' ole takhaar on de veldt. Well, dat's good, dat is, to ketch me like dat; an' now you's foun' me out I s'pose I'll ha' to own up. Dat is de kraal I's a-gun' to get de big feed outo'. But I don't mind anyhow; dere's enough for de two of us, an' forty times over if dat's all. An' to-night's a-gun' to be yust de right night as well.’

“Ou' Wolf he's dat shamed at bein' ketched like dat, an' dat glad o' gettin' off so good, dat he sit right down an' talk growly to save his feelin's. ‘Ho! you ses dere's enough for de two on us, does you. Dat's how many?’

“‘You count 'em when you sees 'em by'n'by,’ ses Ou' Jackalse. ‘You wait here till it 'gins to get night an' den you'll see de sheep yust make darie kraal white. An' fat!—dey's yust so fat dey waddles.’

“‘Is dey?’ Ou' Wolf fair feel his back begin to rise. ‘An' you tinks we'll get 'em a' right?’ ses he.

“‘Get ’em?’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, like dat is a ting to say. ‘You yust wait an’ see.’

“Well, dere dey wait an’ dere dey watch, an’ dere when de sun drop dey see de sheep draw into de kraal, an’ see de farmer come out an’ look ’em over, an’ ahter dat him an’ de boy go off to supper an’ sleep. Den it drop dark an’ come midnight. ‘Now we go down,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse.

“So down dey goes, an’ dey comes to de kraal, movin’ as quiet as shaddas an’ as soft as de dark, an’ dey’s yust dat light an’ empty dey yumps on to de kraal wall like birds a-lightin’. Den dey drops down, an’ dere dey begins to eat.

“Dey eats one sheep an’ dey eats two sheep, an’ den Ou’ Jackalse he draw off dat quiet dat Ou’ Wolf don’t hear, an’ he crawl to de water-let hole at de bottom o’ de kraal wall, an’ tries if he’s still not swell’ too much to slip out troo dat hole, ’cause he knows right well dey’s bofe too full to yump back over de kraal wall. But he finds dat’s a’ right; he can get out easy yet, so he go back an’ he has mo’ feed. An dat way he keep on an’ on, eatin’ fust an’ den tryin if his tummy ain’t too big yet to slip troo’, till at last he cahnt on’y yust scrape troo wid scratchin’ till he’s black in de face. ‘Pity I ain’t shav’ all my sideses,’ ses he, ‘den I could slip troo yust one time mo’. Dem sheep dey is so fat.’

“Well, dere’s de man an’ de dogs to tink on now, an’ dis is de time he want Ou’ Wolf for. He knows Ou’ Wolf’s gone on eat an’ eat an eatin’, till he fair couldn’t har’ly get out o’ de gate if it

was open, let alone troo de waterlet hole, not if de dogs had hol' of his tail. An' dat's yust what Ou' Jackalse bin a' figurin' on, so now he slink away into de bushes close by, an' den he change his voice an' begin to call out: 'Baas! baas! Wolf in de kraal. Baas! baas! Wolf's in de kraal!'

“‘Dere!’ ses he to hisse’f, ‘I’m a right now. De man an’ his dogs ’ll find Ou’ Wolf in de kraal, an’ dey’ll know all about who done it, so dey won’t be lookin’ for anyb’dy else. Dere won’t be no huntin’ achter me—dat’s what I couldn’t stan’ yust now; it’s mo’ dan I ought to hatto do is to walk, let alone run, out o’ dis,’ ses he.

“But he hatto walk some anyhow, ’cause de man he’s heerd de shouts, an’ he wake up, an his dogs an his Koranna boys, an dey all rush out for de kraal. Ou’ Wolf he hear ’em comin’ an’ he make a slope for de waterlet hole, an’ he dive head fust into dat.

“De head part’s a’ right; dere ain’t no trouble about dat part goin’ in. But his body!—Allah Crachty, man! but dat body ain’t a-gun’ to begin a-goin’ into, let alone troo, dat hole. An’ fust ting he know de man has him f’m behind.

“Well, I’s tole you mo’ dan once o’ de lammins an’ de bashins Ou’ Wolf’s had afore dat, an’ he’s been knock pretty sick in his time. But all de biffinest bashins what he ever had was yust pettin’ an’ strokin’ alongside o’ what he get dis time, till at last, when de dogs tink dey’s worried de last life outen him, an’ de man tinks he’s kill’ all der is in him, den de Koranna boys pick up de

carcase an' chuck it over de wall on to de veldt outside, an' dere it lie, lookin' de deadest ting dat ever was alive, while de man an' de boys an' de dogs go back to sleep.

“Ou' Jackalse he's been a-watchin' all dat, an' along about de break o' day he see Ou' Wolf stir a leg. Den come sun-up an' Ou' Wolf stir his tail, an' ahter dat it ain't but a little while 'fore he pulls de pieces of hisse'f togeder an' 'gins to crawl off somehow, 'cause he know if de man find him lyin' dere when he get up he'll skin him for a kaross.

““Ou' Wolf's off for home now,' ses Ou' Jackalse to hisse'f. 'So's I—but I ain't a-walkin'; dat 'ud be too bad, I's dat full. Watch me now,' an' he wink to hisse'f dat same ole wink.

“Well, Ou' Wolf he drag hisse'f along, an' he hump hisse'f along, an' he wish hisse'f along, an' den of a sudden he come plump right onto Ou' Jackalse, lyin' lookin' like he's quite de nex' skyline toder side o' dead. 'By de jimminy!' ses Ou' Wolf, 'dead or ain't dead, I's yust a-gun' to bite his year off for shoutin' out de farmer an' de dogs on to me. I will dat.'

“But he hadn't no sooner come closer to worry him dan Ou' Jackalse open his eyes. 'Ho!' ses he. 'So dat's how you pay me for lettin' you come along o' me, an' givin' you a fair ole gorge, is it? Fust you gets all you can stuff, an' den you shouts to de farmer dat Ou' Jackalse is in de kraal! an' out he comes an' de dogs, an' dey's most killed me de deadest Jackalse ever was. Allah Crachty! I's know better dan trust you anoder time if ever I gets over dis,' ses he, an' he

kick out one leg wid a yerk as if he's goin' a deader.

“Ou' Wolf he's fair knock' back on his tail wid de 'stonishment. ‘Well, I be jimminied!’ ses he. ‘When I hear you wid my own years shoutin’ “Wolf in de kraal!” an’ now you try to come over me dat I shout de farmer out to you! Dat’s a good ’un, dat is.’

“‘Does you mean dat I didn’t hear you a-shoutin’ de farmer dat I was in de kraal?’ snarl’ Ou’ Jackalse, like he want to know what next.

“‘An’ does you mean to say I didn’t hear you a-shoutin’ de farmer dat I was in de kraal?’ growl’ Ou’ Wolf.

“Ou’ Jackalse make like dey’ll be tellin’ him dem ain’t his own years nex’. ‘Look-a’-me, Ou’ Wolf,’ ses he. ‘Dis yere’s mighty funny. Some’dy must ha’ shouted some’dy’s in de kraal, else how come de man out an’ bash me like I is. Who could ha’ done it if it wasn’t you? ’nless, ’nless—by jimminy!’ ses he, ‘’nless’n it’s darie Ou’ Baviyàan! I seen him chained up dere by de house, an’ he look mighty sour at me ’cause I’s loose. But I didn’t tink he’d a done it on us—did you now?’

“Well, Ou’ Wolf he ’gun to go back in his mind on all de tings what Ou’ Baviyàan’s done in time past, an’ he ’gin to tink he ain’t so su’e but what it’s just de sort o’ ting Ou’ Baviyàan

would do if he got de off chance. ‘If I’d on’y a-seen darie Ou’ Baviyàan,’ ses he, ‘I bet I’d a-done sometin’.’

“‘Yes. But now dere’s de gettin’ home,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse. ‘You’s a’ right, you can travel; but me—I don’t know what I’s a-gun’ to do, as bad as I is.’

“‘Ou’ Wolf he tink it over. He’s yust about so bad hisse’f he couldn’t feel no badder. But Ou’ Jackalse had let him in to a share o’ dat big ole feed, an’ he’s had dat feed anyhow. He ain’t a-gun’ to leave no ole chummie like dat. ‘Well,’ ses he, ‘I’s pretty rocky myse’f, but if you manage to get onto my back, I tink I’ll get you home some ways.’

“‘You looks mighty bad,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, an’ he screw his face up like he wantto groan, but dat’s to hide de chuckle. ‘An’ yet I’ll hatto get carried somehow!’

“‘Up you come den, an’ say no more about it,’ ses Ou’ Wolf.

“‘Well, dey got him up on his back ahter a terr’ble struggle, an’ Ou’ Wolf he stuck to it an’ ’gin to knock off de len’ths to’ards home. But Ou’ Jackalse he’s yust dat tickle wid hisse’f he cahnt keep it in, he ha’ to sing it out:—

“Dis de funniest ever you foun’,

For de sick he carry de soun’—

Work’s on’y a fool to a trick,

For de soun’ he ride de sick.

“‘What’s dat?’ ses Ou’ Wolf, stoppin’ like he’s ready to t’row him down.

“‘Oh,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, ‘I only sing sometin’:’

“‘It’s good when de one dat’s soun’

Don’t mind to carry de sick.’

“‘A’ right,’ ses Ou’ Wolf. ‘But I t’ought it soun’ like sometin’ else.’ Den he go on agen.

“Well, he go on an’ on, carryin’ Ou’ Jackalse, till dey comes nigh home, an’ Ou’ Jackalse he

cahnt hold in no longer for fear de laugh in his inside'll bu'st him tryin' to get out. He yust ha' to get down an' dance, an' he gi'es one high ole kick an' a yump, an' over go Ou' Wolf on his head, an' den darie skellum he's a-prancin' an' a-dancin' all roun' him, wid de same ole song a-goin':—

“It's de funniest ever you foun'.

When de sick he carry de soun',

It never was done before

Dat de well he ride de sore.

“Ou' Wolf he wantto get up an' yust fight an' bite, but what wid de bashin' he had in de kraal, an' de fashin' he had carryin' darie Ou' Jackalse, he's too fair gone in to get up agen. ‘But on'y wait till I get hold o' you agen,’ ses he, ‘dat's all!’

“‘Yes, yust wait,’ ses Ou' Jackalse a-chucklin'.

“An',” ended the old Hottentot, “as fur as I can make out he's bin a-waitin' ever since.

Leastaways, I don't hear yet as he's ever done it. An' de bettin's all de oder way till now."

When the Birds would choose a King which tells also why the white owl only flies by night

The three children were lounging with the dogs under the tall blue-gums by the house corner, when the old Hottentot stepped out of the kitchen to find a shady spot for his afternoon nap. Before he could settle anywhere, however, the eldest boy lifted his face and caught sight of a mere speck, far up in the still hot sky, where a vulture hung motionless in the blue.

“Oh, look!” cried he at once. “There’s Old Baldy, the Aasvo’el, almost out of sight. Ain’t he just high! I bet there ain’t any other bird can fly as high as he can.”

The old Hottentot turned, first to look at the vulture and then at the little boy. “Well,” said he, “dere was one time, dough, when it took a whole big indaba of all de birds to say which flew de highest—him or Young Tink Tinky.”

“Young Tink Tinky!” echoed the eldest boy scornfully. “Why! he’s the very littlest, teeniest bird in the veldt!”

“Yes, dat’s yust de way Ou’ Jackalse talked,” answered Old Hendrik gleefully. “But he find out ’fore he finis’ dat it ain’t de size but de sense dat counts.”

“Well, I bet I could soon settle which flew the highest,” returned the boy.

“Mebbe,” said Hendrik. “But anyhow, it took de birds a deal o’ time to settle it. An’ trouble—dere was trouble, too, ’fore dey finis’, an’ de White Owl he ain’t never fly about in de daytime from dat day to dis. He’s mighty big, an’ he’s a mighty ole beak an’ clawses, but he darsent on’y fly about o’ nights since den.”

“Oh, now, you must tell us all about it, Ou’ Ta’,” commanded little Annie. “You’ll see how soon we’ll settle it.”

“Will I, Ainkye?” answered the old fellow, with his deepest smile. “Well, here’s de tale an’ you can try anyhow. You see, it was all along o’ dese yere birds dat on’y come in de summer an’ don’t stay for de hard times in de winter. De Af’icander birds dat live here all de time dey got to studyin’ about dese outlander birds what yust comes to skim de cream o’ de year; an’ nawtin’ ’ud do ’em but dey’s goin’ to make a King. Dey reckon de King he’ll tell dese outlander birds he’s had yust about enough o’ deir hanky panky, an’ dey’ll ha’ to stop here all de year roun’ or stop som’ere’s else; but dey cahnt do bofe. Dat’s what Kings is for.

“Well, de birds dey talks to one anoder, an’ de birds dey gets togeder for a big indaba; but when one ses do dis way, anoder ses do dat way, till dey all dunno what’s it all a-gun’ to end in, an’ at last dey all agrees to ax a outsider to set some way o’ choosin’ dis yere King. An’ what

outsider? Why, who but Ou' Jackalse, o' course.

“But dey'll ha' to wait a day or two 'fore dey gets him. De Aard-Vark is invite' Ou' Jackalse to a big dwala drink, an' it ain't no use to talk till dat's over.

“Well, dis yust suit Ole Baldy Aasvo'el. He don't say a word, but he sail off, an' by'n'by he's a-hangin' yust over de Aard-Vark's kraal, where de Aard-Vark's frien's is drinkin' dwala, an' he hang dere till he sees Ou' Jackalse a-lookin' up at him. Den he drops down behind de rise a little way off, an' dere he waits. He knows Ou' Jackalse 'll come sniffin' out, tinkin' dere's meat dere.

“Tain't more'n a minute 'fore here comes Ou' Jackalse a' right. ‘Hello! Baldy,’ ses he, ‘where's de meat?’

“‘Well,’ ses Baldy, ‘dere ain't no meat here yust now. But dere can be lots an' lots of it for you 'fore long if you an' me is frien's dese nex' few days.’

“Ou' Jackalse is pretty full of dwala, an' de dwala make him pretty full o' feelin' yust a' right, so he on'y laugh an' sit down. ‘How come dat?’ ses he.

“Dis way,’ ses Baldy. ‘All us birds is a-gun’ to make us a King, an’ we’ve agree’ to call you in to gi’e us sometin’ to go by to settle de one it’s to be. You’s to set sometin’ for de birds to do, an’ de one dat does it he’s to be de King. So I’s come to see you about it beforehand.’

“You is, hey?’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, de dwala warmin’ him up good an’ happy. ‘An’ how is you come now? Is you a depitation, or is you come on your own? Is you here for all de birds or yust for one—yust for Ole Baldy?’

“Ole Baldy fair scowl to hear Ou’ Jackalse bring it out full an’ ugly like dat. But he reckon it’s de dwala doin’ it, an’ so he’ll try a bit longer. ‘Well,’ ses he, an’ he gi’en hisse’f a look up an’ down. ‘Don’t you tink I’d be a bit a’ right in de Kingin’ line myse’f? I tinks I’d be full price an’ some change over myself.’

“You does? Ho! you does, hey?’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, an’ he drop his nose atween his paws an’ fair root it in de groun’ wid laughin’.

“You should ha’ seen Ole Baldy’s feders stand up. ‘Yes, I does,’ ses he. ‘An’ how come not, I’d like to know?’ ses he. ‘Anyhow, it’s a-gun’ to pay you a lot better to stand in wid me an’ get me King dan wid any o’ de oders. It’ll pay you a lot de best,’ ses he.

“Ou’ Jackalse ain’t got so much dwala in him but what he ketch on to dat word ‘pay’ a’ right.

‘How’s it gun’ to pay me?’ ses he.

“‘Easy,’ ses Baldy. ‘If you gets me King, den every bird dat eats meat’ll ha’ to leave you de one half of it. What price me now?’ ses he. ‘Is dere any oder bird can offer better?’

“‘Well, dat ain’t bad,’ ses Jackalse. ‘But s’posin’ I bargains wid you, den what’s de plan? I s’pose you’s made some sort o’ plan for me to work on?’

“‘Dis,’ ses Baldy. ‘When all de birds at de indaba axes you what dey’s to go by, den you answers an’ tells ’em dat de birds is got wings yust to lift ’em in de air. Well, an’ since de birds is on’y birds so’s dey can rise in de air instead o’ walkin’ on de ground, den de bird dat can do bird’s work best is de best one, an’ it stand to reason de best should be King. So let ’em all fly up, an’ de one dat flies de highest is de King—dat’s fair enough, ain’t it?’ ses he.

“‘It do soun’ a’ right,’ ses Jackalse. ‘An’ you can ax de oder birds weder it’s fair or not if you like. Anyhow, it’s a bargain so far—an’ now I’s off back to de dwala,’ and off he pop.

“‘Ole Baldy yust stop long enough to watch him out o’ sight. ‘I’s fix’ dat skellum dis time a’ right,’ ses he. ‘King o’ de birds, eh! See me when I’s doin’ de Kingin’. I bet I’ll make ’em all fly round a bit.’ Den off he pop too.

“In de meantime Ou’ Jackalse is a-headin’ back for de dwala, but he hadn’t got half way ’fore up yumps little Tink Tinky. ‘Mawnin’, Oom Jackalse,’ ses he, yust as smart as a new ticky.

“Go ’way, you spot o’ shadda!’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, in a hurry to get back to de dwala. ‘Go ’way, or I’ll blow you away wid de wind of a wink o’ my eye.’

“Oh, dat’s it, is it?’ ses young Tink. ‘Well, I was comin’ to see you about dis King o’ de bird business. But if dat’s de sort you is, why I reckon I’ll do it on my own, an’ den I shan’t owe nawtin’ to no such a fathead as you.’

“King o’ de birds,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, an’ he squot on his haunches an’ laugh till he fair wobble. ‘You!’ ses he, an’ he laugh agen till he fall on his side an’ beat de ground wid his tail. ‘Oh, do go an’ be King o’ de rest o’ de birds. Be King over Ole Baldy an’ de big White Owl an’ all dat lot.’

“All dat lot o’ big fatheads, like you,’ ses young Tinky, an’ he yust flick down an’ tweak a beakful o’ hair out of Ou’ Jackalse tail. ‘What price dat?’ ses he, as he fly up out o’ reach.

“Ou’ Jackalse yump up like lightnin’ struck him. ‘You young squirt!’ yell’ he. ‘I’ll gi’e you King o’ de birds if I gets hold o you.’

“An’ I’ll show you all about King o’ de birds ’fore I’s done wid you,’ ses Tinky. ‘You tinks you’s yust too smart for common everyday. But I’ll show you yust how smart you ain’t. You wait an’ see.’ An’ off he flick for where he seen Ole Baldy fly up. He knows Ou’ Jackalse come f’ m dere too.

“Now when Ou’ Jackalse an’ Ole Baldy was a-talkin’ togeder, dey ain’t needer on ’em seen de Hokhi-Khee (dat’s de ladybird) a-sittin’ under a grass blade close by. An’ de Hokhi-Khee she on’y want to keep out o’ sight till dey’s gone, ’cause all de brown lace of her wings is all ruffle down her back, an’ it won’t lie nice an’ straight under dat yella cloak o’ hers wid de black spots. ‘Goodness gracious o’ me,’ ses she to herse’f, ‘I yust ain’t fit to be seen! I hope dese two ole buffers ’ll get away soon.’

“So she kept dat close out o’ sight dey never seen her, an’ as soon as dey’s gone she hop down an’ start to get dat lace straighten’ out an’ tucked away nice an’ neat under her cloak, an’ she’s all in a shake an’ a fluster, when down pops young Tink Tinky.

“Well, I yust do declare!’ ses she. ‘What do you drop down on a body like dat for? You’s got as much imperence as if you was de biggest bird, instead o’ de smallest.’

“All right,’ ses young Tinky. ‘I may be de littlest bird, an’ Ole Baldy may be de biggest, an’ he may a-bin here talkin’ soft to you. But I can yust dust him down any day,’ an’ you should a-seen

dat young Tinky stretch-in' out first one little wing an' den de oder, like he's sayin'—'Look at dat now'.

“But de ladybird ain't a-listenin' to none o' his foolishness. ‘Yes,’ ses she, ‘you ses dat now. But you wait a bit till de Aasvo'el's King of all you birds, den you'll ha' to sing small enough, Mr Tink Tinky.’

“‘Ho!’ ses Tinky. ‘So Ole Baldy's bin tellin' you he's gun' to be King o' de birds, is he? But we'll see about dat. Some'dy else may ha' sometin' to say about dat.’

“‘Well, I never,’ ses de ladybird. ‘If dat ain't yust like your imperence! P'r'aps you 'magines you's gun' to be King yourse'f?’

“‘Why not?’ ses he. ‘I's as good a man as Ole Baldy any day.’

“‘You ses you is, an' you has cheek enough to tink you is,’ ses de ladybird. ‘But wait till you comes to try. De one dat flies highest is gun' to be King. I yust heard him settle dat wid Ou' Jackalse. An' now where's you? But p'r'aps you tink you can fly higher dan de Aasvo'el—you has imperence enough.’

“‘An’ I has gumption enough too,’ ses young Tinky. ‘You yust wait an’ see if I ain’t.’

“‘I don’t care what you has if you’ll only go away out o’ dis now,’ ses de ladybird. ‘An’ don’t you come roun’ me any mo’ till you’s beat Ole Baldy flyin’ high.’

“‘Den I’ll be King,’ ses Tinky. ‘Don’t you wish I’d come if I was King?’

“‘No, I don’t,’ ses she.

“‘Den I won’t,’ ses he, an’ off he pops.

“Well, de day comes for choosin’ dis yere King, an’ all de birds dey brings Ou’ Jackalse into de indaba, an’ dey ax him what dey’s got to do to find de right one. An’ Ole Baldy look so hard at Jackalse dat he wrinkle all his head an’ half his neck, an’ Ou’ Jackalse he smile back ’fore he speak. ‘Dere’s on’y one way o’ gettin’ at it,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse. ‘Birds was made wid wings so dey could get up off de earth. So if dat’s what a bird’s for, an’ if dat’s de one ting dat make him a bird, den it stand to reason de one dat can do bird work best is de best bird. If you is to have a King den, why, de best bird should be de best King, or de best King should be de best bird, whichever way you likes it. So now de one dat flies de highest—dat’s de one to be King.’

“Dere’s a lot o’ dem birds ’ud like to say a lot o’ bad words yust den. But de way Ou’ Jackalse lay de business down dey cahnt see yust where to tackle what he said. Dey all has to say, ‘A’ right!’ an’ dey all ses it, but they don’t all tink it. So dere ain’t no more said, an’ dey all lines up in a row. An dere ain’t nob’dy noticin’ dat nob’dy’s seen Young Tinky yet. But dere ain’t nob’dy troublin much about nob’dy else nohow.

“‘Is you ready?’ ses Ou’ Jackalse. ‘Yes,’ ses dey. ‘Den go!’ ses he.

“Up dey goes, an’ up, an’ up, an’ up. An’ fust de partridge drops, an’ den de long-tail fink; and de Kurhaan she tink she never did hear no such foolishness nohow, so down she drop too. An’ dat way dey go on, fust one an’ den anoder droppin’ out, till last of all dere ain’t but one left—Ole Baldy.

“Ole Baldy he go up, an’ on, an’ on, an’ up, till at last he cahnt get higher; but by jimminy, he is up dere. ‘How’s dis for high?’ ses he.

“All de birds look up, an’ none of ’em cahnt say one word. ‘You’s got it,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, ‘you’s de highest.’

“‘Is he?’ squeaks a chinky little voice. ‘Is he?’ an’ dere, where dey’re all lookin’, up pops little Tinky off’n Ole Baldy’s back, where he’s bin hid in de feders widout Ole Baldy knowin’.

‘What price me now?’ ses he, an’ up he go, yards up! ‘How’s dis for higher?’ ses he.

“Ole Baldy he turn his head an’ look up. ‘Hello, you speck!’ ses he, ‘what you doin’ up dere?’

“‘Flyin’ higher’n you,’ ses Tinky. ‘Dat makes me de King.’

“‘King!’ ses Baldy. ‘If I could yust get up dere I’d King you. Come down now!’

“‘Oh, oh!’ ses Tinky. ‘So you gi’es in you can’t get up to me! Dat’s done den. I’s King a’ right,’ an’ he comes down yust as cheeky as billy-o, wid his tink, tink, tink, tink, till he gets to de ground. Den he chucks a leg. ‘King Tinky!’ ses he. ‘Dat’s me.’

“Well, de birds dey all drop down an’ dey wait for someb’dy to say somefin’. But young Tinky he hop in front of Ou’ Jackalse an’ he stick his coat tails out. ‘Well, Oom Jackalse,’ ses he, ‘who’s de smart ’un to-day?’

“‘I wish I was one o’ de birds you’s bin foolin’,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse; ‘I’d show you which was smart.’

“Just den Ole Baldy bounce down in front of ’em. ‘Who’s King?’ ses he.

“De one dat went highest,’ ses Ou’ Modher Reyer, de Blue Crane.

“An’ dat’s me,’ ses Baldy.

“An’ dat’s me,’ ses Tinky, stickin’ his little wings out an’ bouncin’ hisse’f like he was mockin’ Ole Baldy.

“Look-a’-here,’ ses Baldy, ‘if you ses anoder word I’ll scoff you.’

“Will you?’ ses Young Tinky, settin’ hisse’f in front of Ole Baldy like a bantam. ‘You will, hey? Well—anoder word—dere, I’s said it.’

“Ole Baldy yust look one look at Tinky, an’ den he make one dive to scoff him, straight. But he’s dat slow an’ heavy on de ground he might as well try to catch a flea on a blanket; an’ dere’s him a-divin’ an’ a-floppin’, an’ dere’s Young Tink a-flickin’ an’ a hoppin’, till Ole Baldy fair boil over an’ stand still. ‘Birds!’ ses he, ‘is we gun’ to stand dis an’ have dis little squirt say he’s King over us?’

“You bet we ain’t,’ ses de White Owl. ‘Is I de King den?’ ses Baldy nex’, lookin’ at ’em all roun’.

“But dey all want to say sometin’ to dat, ’cause if dey cahnt be King deirselves dey don’t want anyb’dy else to be it. ‘No,’ ses dey. ‘It was to be de one went highest, an’ we all hear you say to Tinky what you’d do if on’y you could get up at him.’

“‘Den what’s a-gun’ to be done?’ ses Baldy, as mad’s a scorpion.

“Well, we’ll ha’ to study dat out,’ ses dey. ‘We’ll ha’ to hold a indaba an’ see what we’ll do about it.’

“Well, dey ketches Young Tinky an’ dey takes him over and puts him into a big Aard-Vark hole. ‘Who’ll we put to watch him now?’ ses dey.

“‘Put de White Owl,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse; ‘he’s got de biggest eyes an’ de widest open.’

“So dey put de White Owl to guard de hole, an’ dey all goes back to hold a indaba.

“‘Why, dis is yust a fine place, it’s so reg’lar nice an’ shady,’ ses Young Tinky to de White Owl. ‘I’s gun’ to have a look for a place to be comfy in.’

“‘Do,’ ses de White Owl. ‘Den you won’t bodder me.’

“But what Tinky’s a lookin’ for is a place to get out at, an’ he look, an’ he look, but dere ain’t no sich a place. ‘I ’specs I’ll ha’ to do sometin’ pretty soon if I’s gun’ to keep dis side o’ trouble,’ ses he to hisse’f.

“Well, dere’s on’y one way out o’ de hole, an’ dat’s de way he come in at, an’ dere’s de White Owl standin’ at it wid his tail dis way, an’ a-starin’ out across de veldt to where de indaba’s goin’ on. Den it strike Tinky what he’ll do. ‘Allah Crachty! I knows what. Wait now,’ ses he to hisse’f.

“So he goes to work, an’ he take some dirt, an’ he wet it an’ he work till he’s made a mud mouse. You should ha’ seen darie mouse. If any mouse ’ad a-seen it he’d a-tink it was his grandaddy, it look such a whoppin’ ole mouse. It fair tickle young Tinky so much when he’d finis’ it dat he hatto yust stop an’ laugh.

“Den he go to de hole an’ he stick dat mouse out slow on one side o’ de White Owl till it yust come into de tail of his left eye, an’ afore you can ketch your brea’f Ole Owl make a lightnin’ of a strike at it—biff!

“Well, he ain’t made sich a mighty ole strike since he was a young fella, an’ he strike dat hard an’ he strike dat true, dat he biff his beak right troo de mouse, so dat de mud bung up his two eyes an’ chock up his froat, an’ you fair never did see no sich a splosh an’ sich a splutter in your

time. ‘Mak’ los’!’ screech he, an’ it sound like a bushman on de mad. ‘Mak’ los’!’ But de mud mouse ain’t a-sayin’ a word, not a word; an’ Young Tink Tinky’s yust a-gettin’ out o’ dat at de rate of half-a-mile in a hunder’ yards—on’y de White Owl ain’t knowin’ nawtin’ about dat.

“Well, Ole Owl he hadn’t more’n got de mud outen his eyes ’fore de indaba’s finis’, an’ here comes all de birds. ‘Where’s dat Tink Tinky?’ ses dey. ‘Fetch him out!’

“‘He’s in dere a’ right,’ ses de Owl. ‘What’s you all decided on?’

“‘Well,’ ses dey, ‘by de law we cahnt yust say. Ole Baldy ain’t King, ’cause he said he couldn’t get up to Tinky. An’ as to Tinky, he ain’t King ’cause he ain’t big enough nohow. But we’s a-goin’ to hang’ him, so dere won’t be no mistake about him not bein’ King. Trot him out den.’

“‘You better trot him out yourse’f,’ ses Ole Owl. ‘My eyes is yust dat full o’ dirt I cahnt see.’

“Well, de Sec’etary Bird he cock his eye into darie hole, like a ole crow squintin’ down a marrow bone. ‘Come out o’ dat an’ be hanged,’ ses he. ‘Make hurry now! We ain’t a-gun’ to wait all day for a speck like you.’

“But dere ain’t no Tinky come out. ‘Dat’s funny he don’t come out when I shout,’ ses Ole Sec.

“Well, de birds dey ses dey ain’t got no more time to fool about. ‘Come on, Ole Owl,’ ses dey. ‘You’s lookin’ after him anyhow. In you pops, den, an’ outs him.’

“‘A’ right.’ In pops Ole Owl, an’ out don’t pop no Tinky. ‘By gum!’ ses all de birds.

“Ole Owl in de hole he look an’ he crook, an’ he glint, an’ he squint, but he don’t find no Tinky. ‘Dat’s mighty funny,’ ses he, comin’ out. ‘I seen you all shove him in here, an’ I ain’t seen him come out; but he ain’t dere now. He must ha’ spooked!’

“‘Oh, he’s spooked, is he?’ ses all de birds, tearin’ mad. ‘Well, we’ll yust make spook o’ you,’ ses dey, an’ dey make a dive for him like one man.

“Ole Owl he yust glint one glance at de lot, an’ den he turn an’ he fair make a head fust for it into dat hole agen, an’ dat’s de one ting saved him. De birds dey cahnt get at him in dere on’y one at a time, an’ dere ain’t any one o’ ’em feel like facin’ dat ole hook of a beak on his lonesome. So dere dey sits outside de hole, waitin’ for him to come out. An’ dere he sits inside de hole, waitin’ for dem to come in; an’ so dere ain’t needer in nor out, but dey bofe sits an’ waits.

“Ses all de birds outside—‘If you don’t come out an’ let us get at you, we’ll yust about dance on you’ chest’.

“Ses Ole Owl inside, ses he—not a word! not a sound!

“Well, dey wait all day, an’ dey wait all afternoon, but Ole Owl ain’t a-comin’ out, an’ dey ain’t a-goin’ in. Den it drop sundown, an’ de birds dey ha’ to fly som’eres to sleep. Dey look at one anoder. ‘Yust wait till to-morrow, dat’s all!’ ses dey, an’ off dey fly to deir sleepin’ places.

“When dey’s gone Ole Owl comes out. ‘I reckon I’ll hatto get as much to eat as I can to-night,’ ses he, ‘an’ den hide some place to-morrow, so dey won’t see me.’

“An’ dat’s yust what he done, an’ yust what he’s hatto do ever since—hunt all night an’ hide all day, for fear de rest o’ de birds see him an’ ketch him, if he move about in de daylight.

“So now you knows how it come dat de Ole White Owl can on’y fly at night,” ended Old Hendrik. “Oh!” said little Annie.

Why Old Jackal slinks his Tail

The little girl was full of excitement. Driving home with her mother from the “dorp,” she had seen Ou’ Jackalse himself—Mynheer Jackal—slinking across the veldt, and all the tales Old Hendrik had told her about him crowded her mind as she watched him. She could hardly contain herself now, as she stood before the old Hottentot pouring forth the story. There was only one regret in it—“He must have been in some trouble, Ou’ Ta’,” said she; “’cause all the time I watched him his tail was right down. I watched and I watched to see if it wouldn’t stick up, ’cause then I’d know he was thinking of a plan; but it never did.”

Old Hendrik smiled. “So his tail was a-hangin’ an’ a-slinkin’ ahter him, was it? An’ didn’t he look back at you over his shoulder as he went?”

“Yes, he did,” answered Annie, still more eager at finding how well Old Hendrik knew the ways and doings of Ou’ Jackalse. “I kept hoping he was thinking of fetching Ou’ Wolf to work for us, then I could tell Ou’ Wolf not to trust him any more, no matter what he said.”

Old Hendrik’s delight bubbled into a jeering shake of the head and a half laugh of derision over the subject as he repeated the name—“Ou’ Jackalse, hey! Ou’ Jackalse!”

“But you needn’t to be feared he’s a-gun’ to get Ou’ Wolf into much more trouble nowadays,

Ainky,” went on the old Hottentot. “He ain’t a-gun’ to get de best o’ so many more folks, not since he went to get even wid Young Tink Tinky, de littlest bird on de veldt. Little Missis Tinky got Ou’ Mammy Reyer, de Crane, to he’p her, an’ dat made all de difference. You seen how he slunk his tail along behind him?—well, dat’s why. He’s a-tinkin’ o’ what happened den, an’ he looked at you over his shoulder, wonderin’ all de time weder you’d heerd de tale or not. It happened dis while or two back, an’ since den he ain’t bin near so sa’cy as he used to was.”

“Oh, poor Old Jackalse!” cried the little girl, “what did happen? Do tell me, Ou’ Ta’.”

“Well,” began Old Hendrik, “if ever you sees Ou’ Jackalse tryin’ to fool Ou’ Wolf into trouble agen, you don’t ha’ to say on’y yust one ting. You’s on’y got to ask him how he likes eggs, an’ den see if he don’t turn round an fair slink off wid his tail draggin’. Dat’s where de trouble come in, he would go ahter eggs.

“You ’members me tellin’ you how Young Tink Tinky bested Ou’ Jackalse when de birds wantto choose a King for demselves? Well, Ou’ Jackalse he never forgot dat, an’ he was al’ays a-studyin’ how he’s a-gun’ to get even, but he couldn’t find de way nohow till at last he sees Missis Tinky a-sittin’ on de nest, an’ he knows by dat dere’s eggs dere. ‘Dat’s me,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse. ‘Eggs is de ting I does like—an’ here’s some. Watch me teach dat Young Tinky dis time.’

“Now dere was a t’orn-tree like dis,”—here Old Hendrik indicated the mimosa under which he sat,—“an’ dis t’orn-tree was a-growin close beside de river, an’ a willow-tree dat was bigger yet was a-hangin’ over de t’orn. In dat t’orn-tree Young Tinky build his nest, an ahter de eggs is all laid, an’ his missis is well an’ comfy settled into sittin’ on ’em, Young Tink he offs to look for scoff for hisse’f an’ de missis. Den’s de time when Ou’ Jackalse is a-watchin’ him, an’ as soon as he’s gone, here comes Jackalse to de bottom o’ de t’orn-tree an’ begins to scratch on de bark—scratch! scratch! scratch!

“Little Missis Tinky she look down out o de nest. ‘Who’s dere?’ ses she.

“‘Me,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse.

“‘What you want?’ ses Missis Tinky, all in a tremble.

“‘Want dem eggs you got,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, wid his hair up. ‘You better be sharp about it too.’

“‘Well, you ain’t a-gun’ to get ’em,’ flutter Missis Tinky; but she’s yust dat frighten’ she cahnt har’ly speak.

“‘Please yourse’f,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse; ‘but if you don’t drop me down a egg dis minute, den I’s a-

comin' up, an' if I once does come up dere, den I's a-gun' to eat you first as well as de eggs. Make a hurry now—drop one!'

“Little missis she get sich a shriek when Ou' Jackalse ses he's a-comin' up dat she yust go all a-flitty flitty, an' dere ain't no two ways about it, she hatto drop him one egg to save de rest. So out she pull it an down she drop it, right into Ou' Jackalse mouf, where he stand on his back legs wid his front feets agen de tree. An' as soon as he feel it in his mouf he yust gullup it down, an' off he go for dat day. 'I'll make dis ting last a bit,' ses he to hisse'f.

“Well, little Missis Tinky she's in dat terr'ble way she cahnt har'ly sit still till Young Tinky comes home, an' as soon's ever she sees him she burst out a-cryin' an' a-tellin' him what happened.

““What! An' you b'lieve sich a fool tale as dat about him climbin' de tree,' ses Young Tinky, fair fightin' mad at de way he lose dat egg. 'He cahnt climb dis tree, not if he break his neck a-tryin'.'”

“But Young Tinky he sees it ain't no use; it ain't a-gun' to he'p his missis for him to shout an' talk about it. 'Never you mind dis time, little missis,' ses he. 'To-morrow you can go an' look for de scoff, an' I stay at home an' wait for Ou' Jackalse. I'll show him what's what dis time, too,' ses he. An' his missis she stop cryin', dough she cahnt stop lookin' where dat one egg

ought to be.

“Well, de nex’ day Young Tinky he stop at home an’ sit on de nest while his missis went for scoff, an’ it ain’t but a while or two ’fore along comes Ou’ Jackalse to de foot o’ de tree-scratch! scratch! scratch!

“Young Tinky he ain’t a-lettin’ Ou’ Jackalse see who’s at home to-day; he yust on’y slant half o’ one eye down at him. ‘Who’s dere?’ ses he.

“‘Me,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse.

“‘An’ what you want scratchin’ dere?’ ses Tinky.

“‘Anoder egg, an’ you best be sharp about it,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse.

“‘Well, you’s yust about got all de eggs you’s a-gun’ to get here,’ ses Tinky, stickin’ all his head an’ shoulders out for Jackalse to have a good look at him.

“‘Oh, it’s you, is it?’ ses Ou’ Jackalse, showin’ his teef. ‘Well, if you won’t drop darie egg down in one minute, den I’s a-comin’ up an’ eat you all up—bones, beak an’ feders!’

“‘Come up den,’ ses Young Tinky, hoppin’ out onto a branch. ‘Yust you come up here if you darse, you hairy skellum you,’ squeak Tinky, hoppin’ up an’ down an’ flickin’ his wings like he’s fair a-gun’ to peck de eyes out o’ de hull fam’ly o’ de Jackalses. ‘You try it on, Mister Ou’ Jackalse, an’ see what I’s do to you!’ an’ Tinky swells hisse’f into a reg’lar ole rage as he tink o’ dat egg yestiday an’ his little missis frighten’ to deaf nearly.

“Dat make Ou’ Jackalse in sich a wax dat he spurt out de word he didn’t mean to. ‘I on’y wish I could yust come up dis tree to you. I’d scoff you down in yust one gullup an’ your eggse ahter you,’ ses he, a-rampin’ an’ a-tearin’.

“‘You ses dat,’ squeak young Tinky, ‘but I knows better. It’s not you cahnt—it’s you dahnt. But I’ll teach you to frighten poor little mammickies into givin’ you deir eggse, you skellum! skellum!’

“Ou’ Jackalse he get dat mad, a-snappin’ an’ a-snarlin’ while he listen, dat he fair turn away an’ slant out o’ dat, an’ Young Tinky is yust dat conceited of hisse’f he cahnt har’ly wait till his missis comes home ’fore he begin a-tellin’ her dat’s de way she ought to done yestiday. An’ Missis Tink she listen an’ she tink she’ll do de same herse’f now, if ever Ou’ Jackalse trouble her agen.

“So de nex’ day Young Tinky he go ahter de scoff, an’ his missis she sit on de eggs, tinkin’ it’s

all right now. But Ou' Jackalse he'd bin a-watchin', an' he know's who's a-gone an who's a-stop at home, an in about no time he's at de foot o' darie t'orn-tree agen, an' de same ole scratch! scratch! scratch! at it.

“Little Missis Tink she stick her head out an' she start to tell him to get out o' dat, in de biggest voice she's got. But she hadn't more dan got out de first two words dan she see his teef where he bare 'em all round, white an' yammerin', an' he look dat savage an' murderin' dat de rest o' de words stuck fast in her froat, an' she fair chattered wid fright.

“Down wi' darie egg, else I'll come an' tear you into smitchies,” ses Ou' Jackalse.

“Missis Tinky nearly drop out o' de nest wid de scrik she got; but she tink o' what Tink Tinky say, an' she squeak it out. ‘You cahnt come up dis tree if you try,’ ses she.

“‘Cahnt I?’ ses he, all hair an' spiky. ‘Yust see me half try!’ an' he gives de biggest yump he ever make in his life, an' it scrape him a couple o' yards up de tree stem.

“Little missis she fair gi'en one big squawk an' tink she's all gone—eggs, nest, an' all. ‘Is you a-gun' to drop me dat egg?’ shouts Ou' Jackalse.

“Yes, yes. Here it is! Take it, take it!’ squeak de little missis, an’ she drop out de one egg to him.

“Ou’ Jackalse he ketch dat egg an’ he gulp it down an’ off he go agen. ‘Nex’ time I come you better drop one quicker. I ain’t a-gun’ to ax twice no more,’ ses he.

“Well, as soon as he go, little Missis Tinky she cry like her heart break, an’ she cahnt sit dere on de dest at all. Anyhow she’s feared to wait till Young Tinky comes home, ’cause she don’t know what he’ll say when he finds anoder egg gone, an’ she’s in dat misery dat she don’t know what to do. Den she tink of her Aunt, Ou’ Reyer, de Blue Crane, an’ she fly off to her where she’s a-fis’in’ in de reeds, an’ she yust up an’ tell her de hull tale of it.

“So darie Ou’ Jackalse’s up to his tricks agen, is he?’ ses Ou’ Reyer. ‘Well, he’s meddle wid de birds before, an’ dis time we’ll teach him to don’t do it no more. Now you yust go home an’ sit on de nest agen, an’ I’ll come in a minute or two—den well be ready for him.’

“Little missis she go back, an’ in a minute or two Ou’ Reyer follows, an’ she hide herse’f in de top o’ de willow-tree over de nest. ‘Now for Ou’ Jackalse,’ ses she.

“Well, it ain’t but a little while rill here come Ou’ Jackalse agen, wid de same ole scratch! scratch! scratch! an’ de same ole terr’fyin’ words—‘Drop me down anoder egg or I’ll come up

an' eat you,' ses he.

“Make like you's a-gun' to drop him one,' whispers Ou' Reyer; an' little Missis Tinky she make like she's a-doin' it.

“Ou' Jackalse he rise up on his hine legs, an' he put his paws agen de tree, an' he open his mouf an' shut his eyes, an' he fair feel de taste o' dat egg a'ready. An' den, yust den, Ou' Reyer she lean out over Missis Tinky an' she open her big long beak, an', swock! she drop a great big bull-frog right into Ou' Jackalse's froat.

“Wow! but dere was a chokin' an' a squeal-in' den. Ou' Jackalse he yump an' he roll, an' he fling hisse'f along de ground a-tryin' to cough up darie fat bull-frog, an' darie ou' bull-frog he puff an' he wiggle an' he slip down an' down till dere he is in Ou' Jackalse's tummy, a-hoppin' an' a-floppin' an' a-croakin' an' a-gloakin' till Ou' Jackalse is yust dat scared dat he light out f'm dere plump across de scenery. An' he go dat fast he yust hit de high places as he went an' never touch' de low. I tell you Ou' Jackalse was scared.

“He don't stop nudder till he's yust dat puffed out dat he roll over an' over like a shot hare, an' he's so long a-gettin' over it dat he forget what day it happen in. Ever since den, too, de birds all click deir beakses at him, an' chatter at him, an' ax him how he likes Tinky eggs; an' dat's what make him so shamed he ain't never cocked up his tail no more—he yust cahnt do it.”

“And serve him right,” cried all the children in chorus. Old Hendrik only shook his head.

Why Little Hare has such a Short Tail

Old Hendrik was standing by the corner of the house, milking pail in hand, watching the slow procession of the cows homeward from the veldt. The calves in the kraal clamoured insistently to hasten their mammies home; those mammies answered now and then with a patient bellow of assurance as they continued their placid pace, and Old Hendrik seemed to be as vacant of thought or stir as they. But when little Annie came strolling out to enjoy the never-staling delight of seeing the headlong rush of each calf in turn to its mammy, the old Hottentot looked down at her and begun without further warning. “Ole King Lion had five cows, an’ t’ree o’ dem was wild an’ wand’ry.”

“Oh!” cried Annie, “I never heard of that. And what did he do with them, Ou’ Ta’?”

“Why, milk ’em, o’ course,” returned Old Hendrik. “What else? An’ some o’ de milk his ole missis an’ de kleinkies drink, an’ some he drink hisse’f. De rest he make de butter wid to grease all deir ole noses.”

“Oh, how funny!” cried Annie in huge delight. “And did he mind them himself?”

“Course not!” retorted Hendrik, a little scornfully. “Ain’t he a king? Kings don’t mind cows. Not him. He yust make all de animals try deir turn at it, but dese t’ree wand’ry ones dey’d keep

gettin' away, an' den de animal dat come home wid dem t'ree missin'—well, he'd be a-missin' too, an' Ole King Lion he'd be dat much fatter.

“Well, it come Little Hahsie's turn at last—Klein Hahsie, dat you call Little Hare, dat skellum Little Hare—but he yust prance out behind dem cows in de mawnin' wid a high ole hop an a skip. He'd show 'em about mindin' five bally ole cows, he would, ses he. He sticks a green twig in his mouf, an' he biffs his ole hat down over his eyes, an' he gets dem cows down in a hook o' de river an' squots down on a little koppiekie to watch 'em, all nice an' all right. ‘Mind five ole cows,’ ses he; ‘by de jimminy, gi'e me sometin' easier—if dere is any.’

“Well, it did look all serene-o, wid him dis side of 'em an' de river bent all round 'em on de oder sides, an' plenty o' grass an' water an' nice trees about. ‘Sho,’ ses he, ‘dem cows stray off? Dey's got mo' sense,’ ses he.

“It was yust sich a easy yob dat in a while his eye 'gun a-wanderin' round to see what else dere is dere besides de cows an' de rest of it. An' fust he sees a little bushiekie, wid green leaves like he swears he ain't seen afore, or leastways he ain't 'xamined much; so o' course he hops over to dat an' pretends to tas'e it, an' feel it, an' turn it over gen'ally.

“Den he sees de blesbuck wanderin' past, wid de teenty little buckies whimperin' an' nosin' ahter deir mammies, an' fust he squot an' watch 'em, an' den he get to feelin' cussed, an' he fair

hop round 'em to scare 'em an' make 'em flurry, till deir mammies turn round an' chase him out o' dat. Next he slant his eye at de spruit an' tinks he'll yust sa'nter down an' frow stones at Ou' Sculpat, de Tortoise, an' ax him what's his latest time for a mile wid a flyin' start. Den he can hear Ou' Sculpat use some rocky ole words.

“But when he gets down to de spruit Ou' Sculpat ain't dere at all, an' dat make him hoppin' mad. He's yust dat mad he chucks stones into de water an' savages de reeds for anoder five minutes on end. Den he looks up an' dere he sees de honey-bird a-whickerin' about. ‘Whatto!’ ses Hahsie. ‘Dere's honey somewheres. Here's on to it like one man.’

“Well, he hops on ahter de honey-bird, an' he hops on an' on, tinkin' every mile he's gun' to get to dat honey soon. An' den here comes a man ridin' along, an' he sees de honey-bird too, an' he 'gins to folio' as well. Hahsie looks at him once, an' he sizes his face up. ‘Dat lets me out,’ ses he to hisse'f. ‘Dat face ain't a-gun' to stand me gettin' any o' dat honey. I'd about better turn back.’

“So he turns back, but de day's got dat hot an' de shade under de little bushiekies is dat cool, he tinks he'll rest him a little while an' den go on agen. Wid dat he finds a nice bush an' squots him down. An' you know what's bound to happen den—he pop off to sleep.

“Along in de afternoon, when de day gets a bit cooler, he wake up an' open his eyes. ‘Hello!’

ses he, ‘where’s dem cows by dis time?’ Den he rub his eyes an’ he grin. ‘One ting anyhow,’ ses he, ‘if Ole King Lion don’t eat again till he eat me for dis, den he’s mighty liable to die o’ starvation.’

“But when he gets back to de hook o’ de river, dere’s de two quiet ole cows all right, but de t’ree wand’ry ones—well, dey’s wandered. He look round an’ round, an’ he hop dis way an’ dat, but he don’t find hide nor hair o’ dem t’ree, till at last it’s about time to be startin’ for de kraal wid dese two. He takes one more long ole look round, but it ain’t no use, it don’t find dem cows, an’ so he starts dese two for home.

“He ain’t a-goin’ far wid ’em dough. He yust folio’s on till de two can see de kraal, an’ den he pops back to de place where de oders was lost. Now dere was a long ole, rocky ole, bushy ole island in de river dere, wid rocks stickin’ up all de way across de water to it, so Little Hahsie can cross wid some tall hoppin’. An’ he crossed, you bet he crossed mighty smart—an’ he find him a snug little place all in a patch o’ big boulders an’ bushes an’ trees. ‘Here’s me,’ ses he, ‘till I sees what’s a-goin’ to happen.’

“Well, he ain’t dere very long ’fore here comes Ole King Lion, yust a-gur-r-rowlin’ an’ a-pur-rowlin’ an’ a-singin’ out, ‘Where’s dat Klein Hahsie dat went out so high an’ smarty dis mawnin’? Lemme yust find him, dat’s all!’ You bet Little Hahsie lie low den, an’ wish dere was big wings to him as well as long legs an’ short ’uns.

“But Ole King Lion couldn’t find him. He ramp an’ he stamp, an’ he squat down like he’s goin’ to be sick an’ brings up a whackin’ ole roar dat fair shakes de island, but he don’t start Little Hahsie, ’cause Little Hahsie’s too tremblin’ to shift a foot, an’ by’n’by King Lion he go off to roar up some oder spot. ‘Dat’s a bit more like what I likes,’ ses Hahsie den.

“So at last it come dark, an’ de lion was far enough off, an’ Little Hahsie hop out to stretch his legs an’ tink a bit. ‘But I wonder how I’ll do now when I goes back home to-morro’,’ ses he.

“Well, to-morro’ come, an’ Hahsie he tink dis way an’ dat way, but he make so little out of it dat he stop anoder night on de island, an’ he ’gin to feel mighty longin’ for home, I tell you. An’ nex’ day it on’y got worse, till it got dat bad about sundown he yust couldn’t stand it no longer. ‘Here’s off home,’ ses he, ‘an’ chance de chips. I’ll bet I’ll manage somehow.’

“In a while he gets home to King Lion’s place, an’ it’s as dark as billy-o, an’ he squots down by de end o’ de barn to see what’s happenin’. By’n’by out comes his ole missis f’ m de kitchen where she’s a-washin’ up ahter supper. ‘Sh—shee!’ ses he, as low as he could for her to hear him.

“She tink she know dat sound, an’ she come up to him to see who it was, an’ she yust open her mouf to let out one big squeal, but he nabs her by de ear in time. ‘If you don’t stop dat row, ole missis,’ ses he, ‘I’ll bite your long fool ears off,’ ses he.

“But we all tink you was dead,’ ses she.

“Hmp!’ ses he; ‘an’ I s’pose you’s a’ready got anoder ole man in your eye?’ ses he.

“I hain’t,’ ses she. ‘One’s enough if he’s bin like you. But when Ole King Lion found de t’ree cows yestiday, an’ you wasn’t wid ’em, he made sure you was dead.’

“An’ was he sorry?’ axes Hahsie.

“Yes; he said it was sich a waste o’ meat, him not gettin’ you to eat,’ ses she.

“Him he blowed!’ ses Hahsie. ‘You go an’ bring me out sometin’ nice to eat, an’ den I’ll see about him. He may be big an’ ugly, but he ain’t so smart as some folk I knows.’

“Well, his missis she bring him out a mealie pap pot wid lots in it yet, an’ some milk, an’ he tucks a fair ole little lot inside him. ‘Dat’s all right,’ ses he when he finis’. ‘Now, you yust fetch me de rake, an’ den skip back an’ leave de kitchen door open.’

“She fetches de rake an’ hands it to him. ‘But what’s you goin’ to do wid dat?’ ses she.

“Get out o’ dis an’ shut up, or I’ll do it to you instead!” ses he, makin’ a comb at her wid de rake, till she fair flew back to de kitchen.

“Well, he looks at de lights in de winda, an’ he tinks o’ de good ole times he’s had dere, an’ den he fair lands into hisse’f wid dat rake. He tears all his clo’es an’ he tears all his hair, an’ he gashes big streaks in his face an’ his hands an’ his ribs, till he looks like he’s yust fell into a big ole mimosa an’ bin drag’ out by de heels. Den he stagger into de kitchen an’ drop on de floor all of a heap. ‘Where’s Ou’ Doctor Jackalse?’ ses he—‘bring Ou’ Jackalse, for I’s yust about gone up.’

“His wife yust gi’en one big ole squeal an’ all de house was upside down. Here dey all comes a runnin’ an’ a yappin’, an’ here’s King Lion troo ’em all. ‘Hello, you skellum,’ ses he, ‘where come yeh from now?’

“Little Hahsie opens one eye an’ looks at him. ‘From where dem t’ree cows horn me nea’ly to deaf, ’cause I stopped ’em wanderin’,’ ses he. ‘I yust got here to-night to see my ole missis agen ’fore I pegs out.’

“Allah Crachty now!” ses King Lion, ‘ain’t dat funny! But where’s darie Ou’ Jackalse? Let’s have dis Hahsie doctored in less’n two shakes of a lamb’s tail.’

“So dey puts Little Hahsie to bed, an’ Ou’ Jackalse turn everybody out o’ de room while he can ’xamine him. He look him over, an’ he turn him over, an’ he feel him over, an’ den—well den, Ou’ Jackalse he wink at Ole Hahsie, slow an’ solemn, an’ Ole Hahsie he wink at Ou’ Jackalse half a-grinnin’.

“‘I tink you’ back’s pretty bad,’ ses Ou’ Jackalse. ‘I ’specs you’ll ha’ to stop in bed dese nex’ days or two, an’ nice bits o’ scoff to tempt your appetite.’

“‘Yes,’ ses Hahsie. ‘A bit o’ sugar cane or a water-millon now ’ud do me pretty fine.’

“So Little Hahsie has to stop in bed for a week, an’ all de time his wife’s a-grumblin’ at him ’cause she has to wait on him, an’ tellin’ him she’ll tell King Lion. An’ Hahsie tells her she’d yust better do it, dat’s all. But all dis time he’s s’posed to a-ketched sich a fair ole cold dat he cahnt har’ly whisper, an’ his back’s dat bad he cahnt har’ly bend it.

“Well, come de end o’ de week an’ King Lion ’gun to smell a rat. ‘To-day you can go an’ work in de to’acco lands,’ ses he.

“Little Hahsie don’t like dat, but he has to go an’ git hold. He lifts dat hoe, an’ he look at dat row, an’ he squint out on de grass alongside an’ see a nice round Aard-Vark hole. But he don’t look de oder way, else he’d a-seen King Lion hidin’ hisse’f to watch him. ‘To’acco hoein’s

worse'n watchin' cows,' ses Hahsie, as he bent his back an' put his hoe to work.

“Now de day was yust de sort o' day for makin' you feel good, an' Hahsie hadn't hoed ten yards 'fore he forgot all about everytin' but wishin' he was out on de veldt. An' all de time King Lion in his hidin' place was watchin' an' watchin' till at last he stick his head up an' shout out —‘Hahsie! Klein Hahsie!’

“‘Here I is!’ ses Hahsie, clear out an' yumpin' up, forgettin' dat cold an' dat sore back he's s'posed to be sick wid.

“King Lion he ses yust one word—‘Ho!’ ses he, an' he make a forty mile spring to ketch Ole Hahsie.

“An' Hahsie he ses on'y one word too—‘Oh!’ ses he, an' he make a fifty mile dive for darie Aard-Vark hole, an' he drops down it out o' sight yust as Ole King Lion claws de tail off him, all but de stump.

“‘By jimminy! dat skellum!’ ses King Lion outside.

“‘Allah Crachty! dat close shave!’ ses Hahsie inside.

“Well, King Lion he waited an’ he waited, but it wahnt no use at all, for Klein Hahsie he didn’t wait two shakes, but he sets to work an’ digs out at anoder place, a long way off in de mealies, an’ pops off over de sky line dat way. But he’s mighty careful to keep out of Ole King Lion’s way since den, for he got sich a scare dat time dat he hain’t never manage to grow a long tail agen, like he used to have afore.

“An’ if you want’s to know yust what a hairy ole scare he got,” continued Old Hendrik, “you notice him nex’ time you sees him. You’ll see a white patch on his tail—dat’s gone white wid de fright he got when de great big claws was a-grabbin’ de rest o’ de tail off. But here’s de cows, an’ I’s got to get to de milkin’,” broke off the old story-teller, swinging his pail and starting for the kraal.

The Bargain for the Little Silver Fishes

The youngest of the three children had brought in a tortoise from the spruit behind the house, and was half-indignant and half-amused at the stolid refusal of Mr Tortoise to put out his head in response to any stroking of his shell, or to any shaking or bumping on the ground. “He’s just that cunning, Ou’ Ta’, I never did see anything like him,” cried the little boy to Old Hendrik.

“Well, he is tink hisse’f mighty cunnin’ sometimes,” answered the old Hottentot genially. “But dere was once now, when Klein Hahsie want him to ketch him de little silver fis’es.”

“Oh, but that Klein Hahsie—that Little Hare—he is just such a skellum!” broke in Annie.

“Well,” hesitated Old Hendrik, “Little Hahsie he is a bit smart, but den he don’t get nob’dy’s bones broke anyhow. An’ besides, Ou’ Sculpat dere—de Tortoise—he was yust too lazy for ornament, let alone use.

“It was a’ dis way. Little Hahsie he was a-hoppin’ an’ a-floppin’ along down de spruit one day, an’ he come to where de water was a-runnin’ clear an’ fine, an’ what should he see in de big water-hole but all de little silver fis’es yust a-glintin’ an’ a-twinklin’. Allah Crachty! he fair squot right down an’ watch ’em, dey look dat good an’ fine.

“But Little Hahsie ain’t yust like a otter in de water, dough dere ain’t no otter of ’em all could beat him at wantin’ dem fis’es. So he squot, an’ he study, an’ he tink till at last he see Ou’ Sculpat a-danderin’ down, an’ makin’ no mo’ to do but fair flop right in to de water, an’ sort o’ hang in dere wid his nose yust out, like a bird might be a-hangin’ in de air wid his beak catchin’ on to a cloud.

“Little Hahsie fair cock his one year at dat to see Ou’ Sculpat do it so easy, an’ so twenty-shillin’s-in-de-pound comfy like. ‘By jimminy, Sculpat, you looks at home all right,’ ses he.

“‘I is,’ ses Sculpat, an’ he don’t take so much trouble as to turn his head when he speak to Little Hahsie behind him, much less to turn his body. He sort o’ shift one eye half-way round, an’ dat’s quite enough too, tink he.

“‘An’ what does you do when you is at home?’ ax Hahsie.

“‘Dis,’ ses Sculpat, an’ he don’t take de trouble to keep dat one eye half-way round, but let it swing back like a swivel.

“‘Little Hahsie he flick his years like he tink someb’dy ought to yust kick de stuffin’ out o’ Sculpat. ‘But,’ ses he, ‘you has to eat What you do den?’

“‘Eat,’ ses Sculpat—yust de one word.

“‘Oh,’ ses Hahsie, like he’d like to do dat kickin’ hisse’f. ‘Den you does ha’ to shift yourse’f a bit sometimes.’

“‘But I don’t,’ ses Sculpat. ‘I’s in my dinner now—dese water-weeds!’

“‘Oh, you is, is you?’ ses Little Hahsie, an’ he’s yust dat hairy over it dat he biffs de ground wid his back leg an’ he yump over his own shadda. ‘You’s fair dat lazy you’d rader eat weeds, when all de time dem pretty little silver fis’es is a-twinklin’ an’ a-slantin’ roun’ you! Allah Crachty!’

“‘What’s I want wid twinkly little fis’es?’ ses Sculpat. ‘Weeds is nice now, but fis’es—’

“‘You can keep all de weeds if you gi’es me de fis’es!’ ses Hahsie, like he never did hear no such a fathead notion.

“‘An’ how if I keeps all de weeds anyhow, an’ lets you do de same wid de twinkly little fis’es, hey?’ ses Sculpat, an’ his face kind o’ shine like he’d be a-grinnin’ if it wahnt too much trouble.

“‘Little Hahsie squot down agen at dat What Ou’ Sculpat ses is yust so right flat an’ square dat

Hahsie he feel right flat too. But he see de little silver fis'es a-flashin' agen an' he fair cahnt give up yet. 'Dat's a' right,' ses he; 'but I's got my good clo'es on, an' dey won't do to get wet. What say you now if you was to ketch me out a little string of 'em, hey?'

“‘What ses I?’ ses Sculpat. ‘Rats!’

“‘Little Hahsie he's yust dat mad he pick up one foot to go, but he's yust dat gone on dem fis'es dat he put anoder foot down to stop. ‘Look-a'-here,’ ses he. ‘If you ketch me out some o' dem fis’, den I'll fetch you lots o' de nicest garden stuff from de farm yonder.’

“‘Garden stuff!’ ses Sculpat. ‘Huh!—here's weeds!’

“‘An' what if I eats up dem weeds?—what den?’ ses Hahsie.

“‘Dere's mo' weeds in de nex' water-hole,’ ses Sculpat.

“‘But I'll eat dem too,’ ses Little Hahsie.

“‘Ou' Sculpat he yust lift his head clear o' de water, an' he stick it straight up, and he laugh as quiet an as ghosty as if dat's de richest ting he's ever hear. ‘Oh! you yust go on an' eat 'em,’ ses

he. ‘Do go on an’ eat ’em—an’ by dat time your little tummy ’ll be swell’ an’ swell’ till you’s all blowed up like a poisoned pup. Ho, yis! you start in an’ eat ’em, do!’ an’ Ou’ Sculpat he laugh like he’s never a-gun’ to stop.

“Dat make Little Hahsie dat huffy he fair snift agen. ‘You might laugh some mo’,’ ses he. ‘Why don’t you go on an’ laugh some mo’? You’ moufs big enough, an’ you’s ugly enough.’

“‘But I ain’t half as ugly as you’d be if you eat all de water-weeds, or dropped in an’ tried to ketch de little twinkly fis’es,’ ses Sculpat; an’ he laugh agen worsen an’ ghostier dan ever.

“Dat stir up Little Hahsie till he’s fair clawin’ mad, but yust when you tink he’s ’gun to begin to ploppin’ out bad words, right den he seem to wilt down into quiet, an’ his face straighten out all de wrinkles like a boy when you gi’es him sixpence for sweets. He tinks dere’s anoder way, an’ all he ses is—‘All right, Sculpat. Good mawnin’,’ and he offs, an’ he don’t turn round needer, nor let on at all when he hear Ou’ Sculpat laughin’ some mo’ behind him. He on’y grin an’ grin.

“But ’stead o’ goin’ home he goes off to see Ou’ Waxa, de Honey-bird. ‘I wants some honey,’ ses he.

“‘So does I,’ ses Waxa; ‘an’ wouldn’t I like to get some too!’

“But ain’t you got none?’ ses Little Hahsie, wid his bofe years cocked straight up wid s’prise. ‘Ain’t you got yust a leetle teeny bit? Yust a scrape o’ honey’ll do me.’

“Dere’s de place where de honey was,’ ses Waxa, showin’ him de hole in de tree. ‘I ’specs dere’s all de scrape you wants—but I don’t know about de honey.’

“De drippin’s ’ll do. What you’s dropped ’ll do me,’ ses Hahsie. ‘Ou’ Sculpat he ain’t never taste honey yet, so he won’t know de diffrence of a bit o’ dirt or two. De calabas’ I’ll put it in’ll look big all de same, weder dere’s lots o’ honey inside it or on’y one drop,’—an’ wid dat he pulls out a big calabasie wid a long bottle neck, an’ ’gins to scrape up de drippin’s what Ou’ Waxa drop when she pull de bits o’ de comb out o de tree.

“Well, it come de nex’ day, an’ Ou’ Sculpat was dere in de water-hole, feelin’ de weeds agen his mouf an’ not takin’ de trouble to make up his mind weder he’ll eat or not, when here comes Klein Hahsie, yust a-hoppin’ an’ a-skippin’, wid a calabas’ in his one hand, an’ a-beatin’ it wid his toder like a drum. An’ all de time he’s a-keepin’ time wid singin’:—

“Hahsie, Hahsie;

Calabasie;

Dum! Dum! Dam!

“Ou’ Sculpat open his eyes at dat. He turn his head, an’ on dat Little Hahsie gives a extry kick an’ a stride. ‘Here you is, Sculpat!’ ses he. ‘Taste dis!’ an’ he sticks a long feder into de calabas’ an’ pulls it out wid a flouris’ an’ holds it up. ‘Open your mouf, an’ shut you’ eyes, an’ see what comes dat’s spiffin’ nice,’ ses he.

“Ou’ Sculpat he wave hisse’f to de side o’ de pool like he dunno weder it’s wort while or not; but he comes out an’ he stick his head up an’ open his mouf an’ shut his eyes—an’ dat’s why he don’t see de grin come in Little Hahsie’s face, nor’ de double extry flouris’ he give de feder. Den Hahsie draw de feder troo Ou’ Sculpat’s mouf an’ out agen.

“As soon as he taste dat honey Ou’ Sculpat’s eyes flew wide open an’ his mouf begun a-workin’ all ways at once. ‘Allah Crachty! but dat’s fair fine-o,’ ses he. ‘Yust gi’e me a little teenty bit more o’ dat, won’t you?’

“‘Ah, now,’ ses Hahsie. ‘Yestiday when I ax you for some little fis’es you was mighty snifty. To-day I gi’es you some o’ my nice stuff an’ you ses—“Mo.” An’ I ses—“What for?”’

“‘Well, I’ll gi’e you a fis’ if you gi’es me some more o’ dat,’ ses Sculpat.

“‘Hoho!’ ses Hahsie. ‘Yestiday I offer’ to fetch you garden stuff an’ you ses you’s got weeds. S’pose I says now—“What do I want wid fis’es—I’s got honey?”—eh?’

“‘Ou’ Sculpat he try to tink dat over, an’ dis time it’s Little Hahsie is a-grinnin’. ‘Yestiday you laugh’ at me,’ ses Hahsie. ‘What price you laugh at yourse’f to-day? You wouldn’t gi’e me what you had, but you want me to gi’e you what I got. What’s de difference, Sculpat?’

“‘Honey,’ ses Sculpat; ‘an’ you’s got it. How many silver fis’es you want for dat calabas’ o’ honey?’

“‘Ten,’ ses Hahsie.

“‘Right,’ ses Sculpat. ‘You be here in half an hour an’ I’ll have de ten ready.’

“‘Well, Little Hahsie he hop off wid de same ole drummin’ on de calabas’, an’ de same ole song, ‘Hahsie, Hahsie, Calabasia! Dum! Dum! Dum!’ Ou’ Sculpat he sets to work to ketch dem fis’es.”

“‘But, Ou’ Ta’,” interrupted the eldest boy, “how does Ou’ Sculpat catch fish?”

“Ah!” answered the old Hottentot slyly; “dat’s yust what Ou’ Sculpat ain’t never let anyb’dy see yet. Dat’s why he sent Klein Hahsie away till he done it. But anyhow, he ketched dese yere ten, an’ laid ’em out on de green o’ de grass, all white an’ shinin’ silver in de sun; dey looked mighty fine an’ tasty, I can tell you. An’ den along comes Little Hahsie agen wid de calabas’.

“Here’s de fis’; where’s de honey?’ ses Ou’ Sculpat.

“Here’s de honey: count de fis’,’ ses Hahsie.

“Dey counted out de fis an’ dere was de ten a’ right, an’ one little one beside for bargain. ‘Dat’s de style,’ ses Hahsie. ‘Now open your mouf an’ shut your eyes an’ see if dis stuff ain’t rippin’ nice.’

“Ou’ Sculpat he shut his eyes an’ he open his mouf, an’ Little Hahsie he flouris’ de feder out o’ de calabas’ wid a mighty ole twirl, an’ den he draw it troo Ou’ Sculpat’s mouf slow an’ slower till it come out across. Den he yabs it half-way down his froat an’ draw it back. ‘Dere!’ ses he. ‘Ain’t dat nice?’

“Ou’ Sculpat he don’t say a word. He yust smack his lips an’ work his mouf an’ den plank it wide open for more.

“Little Hahsie he sort o’ consider dat open mouf, an’ he grin into it, an’ he slant his eye into it like he’s lookin’ down it to see what Sculpat had for breakfas’, an’ he pat it under de chin, an’ den, while he’s a-considerin’ it some mo’, Ou’ Sculpat open his eyes an’ ketch ole Hahsie a-squintin’ down his gumses. ‘Well,’ ses he, ‘what about de rest of it?’

“Dat’s exac’y what I wants to know,’ ses Hahsie. ‘Dat’s why I’s a-lookin’ down your froat—to see where de rest is went to. Here’s me tipped up de calabas’, an’ den I rub a taste nicely in your mouf, an’ den I drop in all de rest, so you’d have a nice ten minutes suckin’ on it. It drop in a’ right, but, Allah Crachty! where’s it go to? Tell me dat, Sculpat, for dere ain’t no sign of it where I looked.’

“Ou’ Sculpat stretch his eyes wide open at dat. ‘It must ha’ gone somewhere,’ ses Hahsie. ‘Hyer’s de calabas’ quite empty for you to see.’

“Ou’ Sculpat cock his eye into de calabas’, but he cahnt see nawtin’ dere, an’ he look at Little Hahsie, an’ Little Hahsie look back like dis is de funniest merrikle ever was. Den Sculpat dive into de inside o’ his shell to see if p’r’aps de honey might ha’ got dere, but it ain’t; an’ at last he ses—‘What’s you goin’ to do about it?—you’s got de fis’es.’

“‘An’ you’s got de honey,’ ses Little Hahsie.

“‘Where’s it den?’ ses Sculpat.

“‘I put it into dis end o’ you,’ ses Hahsie. ‘You’s de one to know what’s happen’ to it after dat.’

“‘Ou’ Sculpat he consider a bit. ‘Well, I did feel sometin’ ticklin’ half-way down my froat,’ ses he, ‘but I didn’t feel it no furder.’

“‘P’r’aps dat’s de way you’s made inside,’ ses Hahsie; ‘half-way down an’ den a drop.’

“‘Ou’ Sculpat he didn’t say nawtin’ to dat; he stick to business. ‘When’s I to have some mo’?’ ses he.

“‘When I wants more fis’,’ ses Hahsie, his big eyes fair a-shinin’ wid wonderin’ about dat honey still.

“‘An’ when’s dat?’ ses Sculpat.

“‘When I feels like I’d like some,’ ses Hahsie, an’ he don’t grin a bit.

“‘To-morro’?’ axes Sculpat.

“‘A’ right,’ ses Hahsie. ‘You have de fis’es ready an’ I’ll see about gettin’ some mo’ honey. So long, den,’—an’ Mr Hahsie he picks up de ten fis’es an’ de little one, an’ he offs.

“‘Ou’ Sculpat watch him go a minute. ‘Dat stuff is taste rippin’,’ ses he. Den he flop into de water agen, but he don’t eat any weeds.

“‘Well, de nex’ day dere’s Ou’ Sculpat ready wid de ten fis’es but dere ain’t no little one extry dis time, an’ hyer comes Hahsie wid de same ole drummin’ an’ singin’—‘Hahsie, Hahsie, Calabasia! Dum! Dum! Dum!’

“‘But dis time when Ou’ Sculpat open his mouf an’ shut his eyes he don’t shut ’em; not quite; he keep one eye half-open. Dat’s de way he seen de gay old flouris’ Little Hahsie give de feder, an’ de little little drop o’ honey dere is on it too. Dat’s de way also he seen de grin on Little Hahsie’s face, when Hahsie’s a-lookin’ into his mouf, where he’s touchin’ spots here an’ dere wid de feder, an’ he get dat s’picious dat his one eye spring wide open—an’ dat’s de way Little Hahsie seen yust in time dat he’s a-lookin’.

“‘But Little Hahsie he’s a gamey ole bird, an’ he don’t turn a hair nor let on in any sort o’ way. He yust holds de feder up like he’s waitin’, an’ he ain’t a bit astonish’ when Ou’ Sculpat lets de oder eye spring open too. ‘How’s de taste o’ dat, Sculpat?’ ses he.

“‘It’s a-gun’ to taste better when dere’s more on top of it,’ ses Sculpat. ‘Come on wid de rest.’

“Well,’ ses Hahsie, ‘you ain’t no picaninny. You don’t want me to stick a bib under your chin an’ feed you wid a feder. Here you is—take de calabas’ an’ eat de lot, an’ I’ll take de fis.’

“Sculpat he take de calabas’, an’ Hahsie he pick up de fis’; but he ain’t got two skips away before Ou’ Sculpat sings out: ‘Hey yeh! Where’s-dis honey?’

“Where you’s got it, in de calabas’,’ ses Hahsie.

“Dat’s yust where I ain’t got it,’ ses Sculpat. ‘Dere’s de calabas’ an’ dere ain’t de honey; you look for yourse’f.’

“Little Hahsie look dat astonish’—you never seen no sich astonishment. ‘Why,’ ses he, ‘I went to Ou’ Waxa, de Honey-bird, myse’f wid dat calabas’, so’s to be sure an’ get it full. An’ now I yust turns my back an’ you ses dere ain’t none in it!’

“An’ dere was yestiday, too,’ ses Sculpat.

“Yes,’ ses Hahsie, comin’ one step back. ‘Dere was yestiday; an’ I ’specs dat’s what’s de matter to-day, same as ’yestiday. You’s gulluped de lot down in one, an’ now you wants to bluff me out dat you ain’t had none.’

“Dat sort o’ talk won’t do,’ ses Sculpat ‘Hyer’s de calabas’ an’ hyer ain’t no honey. You can look for yourse’f.’

“Hahsie looks, an’ he cahnt see no mo’ inside dat calabas’ dan’ anyb’dy else can see de inside of any other bottle-neck calabas’. But he make like he’s fair astonish’, all de same. ‘By jimminy! it do look like it’s empty,’ ses he. ‘But I’ll tell you what, you let me have dat calabas’ agen, an’ I’ll take it back to Ou’ Waxa an’ ax her how it is dere ain’t no honey in it. An’ to-morro’ when you has de fis’es ready I’ll bring two lots o’ honey, one for to-day as well as to-morro’. I’ll ha’ to go quick, dough, if I’s gun’ to ketch Ou’ Waxa ’fore she go. So long, den,’ an’ he offs wid de calabas’ an de fis’ ’fore you can say rats!

“Ou’ Sculpat ses on’y one ting: ‘To-morro’ I has de honey fust’. Den he ins to de water-hole an’ tinks.

“Well, to-morro’ comes, an’ de ten fis’es dis time is all laid out in a wheel, wid deir little tails togeder an’ deir heads out, so dey look mighty fine in de sun. But dis time here come Little Hahsie widout no calabas’ at all. ‘Hello!’ ses Sculpat, ‘where’s de honey?’

“Dat’s yust what Ou’ Waxa said when I took her de calabas’,’ ses Hahsie. ‘An’ dis time she ain’t a-trustin’ me wid de honey. You’s got to bring de fis’es an’ come wi’ me an’ get de honey from her yourse’f.’

“Well,’ ses Sculpat, ‘I’s gun’ to see dis ting troo dis time. I’s comin’. Show de way, den,’ an’ he slings de fis’es two by two on his back an’ off dey pop.

“Off dey pops an’ dey gets five yards on de road an’ Hahsie finds hisse’f a hundred yards ahead, so he squots an’ waits for Sculpat to come up. ‘You better to shift yourse’f a bit mo’ livelier,’ ses he.

“Dey gets twenty yards furder, an’ Little Hahsie finds hisse’f hoppin’ along on his lonesome near out o’ sight ahead. ‘Allah Crachty!’ ses he, ‘I might do a sleep while I’s waitin’ like dis,’ an’ as soon as Ou’ Sculpat comes up—‘Is you goin’ to get dere to-day, or is it to-morro’?’ ses he.

“But Ou’ Sculpat he ain’t got time for talkin’. He yust keep on flip-a-flipperin’ along de road, an’ Hahsie he starts wid him agen.

“Well, dis time Hahsie gets clean out o’ sight over de rise, till after a while he comes tearin’ back, head fust, an’ his front legs havin all dey can do to keep out o’ de way o’ de hind ’uns. ‘Look-a’-hyer, I’s been over de rise, an’ dere’ll be no honey left by de time we get dere at dis rate.’

“‘Ain’t I a-comin’?’ ses Sculpat.

“‘Yes,’ snort Hahsie, ‘an’ so’s good times—but when? We’s a-gun’ to lose dat honey if we don’t do sometin’. Here,’ ses he, an’ he hops alongside Ou’ Sculpat. ‘Gi’e me de fis’es an’ I’ll go on an’ get de honey till you come,’ an’ ’fore Ou’ Sculpat can consider dat, Little Hahsie snatches de fis’es off his back. ‘You keep comin’ along till you gets dere,’ ses he, an’ off he scoot wid his legs goin’ yards long.

“‘I’ll come along in time,’ ses Sculpat as Hahsie go over de rise. ‘I’ll keep on. I wants dat honey.’

“Well, he did keep on,” concluded Old Hendrik. “He kep’ on an’ he kep’ on, over de rise an’ over de veldt. An’ he look about an he ax about, but—he ain’t never come along to dat honey yet. An’ he never will.”

Why the Tortoise has no Hair on

“But,” demanded Annie of the old Hottentot, a couple of days later, “after that horrid Little Hare cheated Old Tortoise over the little twinkly fishes, what did Old Tortoise say next time he met him?”

“What did Ou’ Sculpat say to Little Hahsie?” repeated Old Hendrik, with a sudden wide open laugh. “Well, Ainky, he said a lot; you may bet he said a lot. He yust hatto say a lot ’cause what he ha’ to say wahnt true; an’ when you hain’t got de trufe to tell, den you has to use a mighty lot o’ words to make it stick.”

“But surely Old Tortoise didn’t believe that Little Hare after what he’d done!” protested Annie.

“Oh, but you hain’t never hear dat Little Hahsie talk when he’s a mind to butter some’dy down,” rejoined Old Hendrik. “Ou’ Sculpat’s one o’ dese people what wants to know ’fore dey b’lieves anytin’, an’ he was raingin’ round for blood an’ t’under lookin’ for Little Hahsie. Well, an’ he meet him, an’ de nex’ ting you knows dey’s yust ole chummies a-plantin’ peach-trees togeder. Dat’s fine, ain’t it? But den, de finis’ of it!—an’ de finis’ of it is, Ou’ Sculpat hain’t got no hair on him any mo’.”

“Why! did tortoises ever have hair on?” demanded little Annie in blank astonishment.

“O’ course dey had hair on,” retorted Old Hendrik, protesting at such astonishment in his hearer. “Ain’t his big broder, de otter, got hair on him yet? But Sculpat would get mix’ up wid Little Hahsie, an’ dere you is; he hain’t got no hair on him no more.”

“Oh, how was that? Do tell us,” begged Annie.

“Why, it was dis a-way,” went on Hendrik. “When dey did meet, an’ when Ou’ Sculpat finis’ talkin’ big, an’ Little Hahsie finis’ talkin’ butter, den Hahsie feel dat good an’ harum-scarum inside him dat he hop, an’ he skip, an’ he monkey off across de veldt till he come to a farm, an’ dere was de peach garden right in his way, wid de farm house a bit way off f’ m it.

“Well, Little Hahsie he squot an’ he sniff, an’ he tink about de dogs an’ de little boys dat frow stones; but he tink o’ de peaches too, an’ he feel yust dat cussed dat he’s a-gun’ to have a try at dem peaches if he lose his tail for it. He can see de fence is all aloes an’ prickly-pear, growin’ dat close dere ain’t room even for Ou’ Ringhals, de snake, to get troo, let alone a Hahsie; but dat ain’t a-gun’ to send him off widout peaches.

“So he looks about, an’ dere’s a round stony koppie yust back o’ de house an’ garden, an’ he hop round an’ up de back side o’ dat koppie, an’ peep over to have a reglar look at tings. An’ under a tree at de foot o’ de koppie he sees two fat dogs a-sleepin’, an’ comin’ f’ m de garden dere’s a little boy wid his daddy’s ole hat full o’ peaches; dese big, fine, girl’s-cheek peaches.

An' de boy goes an' sets down under de tree.

“Little Hahsie he look at de boy, an' he look at de dogs. Den he look at de big stones, an' de little bushes all down de side o' de koppie, an' his big eyes 'gin a-shinin'. ‘I knows how I'll get dem peaches,’ ses he.

“Well, he creep down de koppie troo de bushes an' de stones till he's right at de bottom an' on'y about forty yards away from de little boy, an' den he pop out right in front o' him. He gi'es one hop an' he gi'es two hop, an' den all of a sudden he squot flat, like he's yust seen de little boy an' tinks de boy ain't seen him. But dere's one fair ole yell an' one mighty ole yump f'm darie boy, an' den he's yust a-sikkin' de dogs on to ketch dis hare.

“Dat's all Little Hahsie want. While de boy's a-yellin' an' a-yumpin', an' while de dogs is a-wakin' an' a-lookin' out to see what's it all about all dat time Klein Hahsie's yust a-makin' a brown streak round dat koppie.

“But he ain't. He on'y make ten yards of it an' den he's out o' sight round de corner. Dat's far enough, an' he yust gi'es one fair ole yump to one side, up de koppie, an' squots down flat behind a stone till de dogs is rush past wid de little boy runnin' all he know ahter 'em. Den Hahsie yust hop back to darie ole hatful o' peaches under de tree, an' pick it up an' skip out o' dat eatin peaches all de way.”

“And what did the little boy do when he got back and found his peaches gone?” broke in Annie’s younger brother.

“Well,” answered Hendrik, “I on’y heard about what Klein Hahsie done. Dey don’t say nawtin’ about what de boy done. But I ’specs he yust went back an’ got some mo’ peaches.

“But about Klein Hahsie,” resumed he. “Dese yere peaches taste yust dat good dat all de while he’s a-eatin’ ’em he’s tinkin’ how nice it ’ud be if he had his own tree to pick at widout no dogs to chase him. An’ de mo’ he eat de mo’ he study, till at last it strike him what to do. Den he saves de last two o’ de peaches, an’ he biff dat ole hat into shape wid a one-two, an’ swack it down on one ear an’ de back of his head, an’ off he set down de spruit to de water-hole where he’ll find Ou’ Sculpat.

“Ou’ Sculpat was dere, wid his chin on top de water, lookin’ yust as leary as ever, an’ he don’t so much as wink his eye till Little Hahsie shout him out. ‘Hello! Sculpat!’ ses he. ‘I’s struck luck since I lef you. I’s got peaches; an’ I reckoned now we’s frens I’d better gi’e you one an’ me de oder. Here you is den, choose which one you’ll have.’

“Well, Ou’ Sculpat he tinks he’ll tink it over, but he look at dem two peach in Little Hahsie’s han’s, an’ fust ting he knows he’s flipped his way out o’ de water an’ he’s comin’ to Hahsie, where he’s a-sittin’ wid one leg crossed over toder, makin’ hisse’f all nice an’ comfy. ‘Here you

is,’ ses Hahsie, givin’ him de biggest an’ de ripest o’ de two. ‘You squot now, an’ we’ll fair enjoy dese ole peaches.’

“So Ou’ Sculpat he squot, an’ dey rolls dem peaches in deir han’s, an’ dey suck ’em wid deir lips, an’ dey squeeze deir teef in yust a leetle bit an’ taste de yuice o’ dat. An’ dat’s so nice dey cahnt hold off no longer, but dey fair yum-yums into dem peaches an’ scoffs ’em down an’ suck de stones clean. ‘What you tink o’ peaches now?’ ses Hahsie.

“‘I tinks I’d like to know where dere’s some mo’,’ ses Sculpat. ‘I’d yust fair live on peaches if I had ’em.’

“‘So’d I,’ ses Hahsie; ‘an’ I’ll tell you what, Sculpat, I’s bin a-studyin’. What you say now if we plant dese two stones an’ grow two trees for us ownselfs, an’ yust sit under de branches an’ watch de peaches ripen? Wouldn’t dat be fine?’

“‘Wouldn’t it yust,’ ses Sculpat. ‘Wouldn’t it yust.’

“‘Right-o den,’ ses Hahsie. ‘Here we is now. You pick a place an’ we’ll plant dese two stones, one for me an’ one for you. We’ll soon have peaches ahter dat—tons an’ tons,’ ses he.

“‘Right you is,’ ses Sculpat. ‘Yonder’s de place. We’ll soon plant ’em.’

“So dey plants dese two stones, an’ de trees spring up, an’ den comes de time to be waterin’ ’em every day. An’ every day Ou’ Sculpat’s at it, carryin’ de water in his mouf to his tree; an’ a-carryin’ all de day ’cause he cahnt on’y hold a mighty little water in his mouf at one time. So his tree kep’ on a-growin’ an’ a-branchin’.

“But Little Hahsie he ain’t a-waterin’ no trees. If darie ole tree o’ his want water, den it ’ad a-better sa’nter over to de water-hole an’ get it; or if it want to die, well, it can yust die an’ be blowed to it, ses he. Den he’d go off an’ squot down an’ watch Ou’ Sculpat carryin’ water, an’ he’d laugh an’ laugh; but he don’t let nob’dy ketch him at dat.

“Well, dis went on an’ on, till Little Hahsie’s tree’s dead wid de want o’ water, while Ou’ Sculpat’s is big an’ bushy wid de plenty of it, an’ in a while it’s fair hangin’ full an’ bendin’ down wid peaches—nice, big, yuicy, girl’s-cheek peaches.

“Ses Ou’ Sculpat to Hahsie: ‘If you’d on’y a-watered your tree you’d a-had peaches too now. Don’t you wis’ you had?’

“‘Well, dem peaches is look nice,’ ses Hahsie. ‘But dey’d be a lot nicer for you if you could get at ’em to eat ’em. How’s you gun’ to do dat, Sculpat?’

“Ou’ Sculpat swivel his eye to look at Hahsie. Hahsie don’t wink a word. Ses he: ‘It’s all right, ain’t it? Dere’s your peaches an’ dere’s you, but dere ain’t de eatin’—an’ de eadn’s de ting, ain’t it? How about dat part, Sculpat?’

“Ou’ Sculpat yust drop right flat at dat; he hain’t never tink o’ dat. He look at dat tree an’ he look at dem peaches, such nice big peaches; an’ den he look at Little Hahsie. ‘What’ll I ha’ to do?’ ses he.

“‘Well,’ ses Hahsie, ‘I reckon dere ain’t on’y one way. You’ll ha’ to get some’dy to climb up in de tree an’ drop ’em down to you.’

“‘An’ you’s de on’y one I knows dat can do it,’ ses Sculpat. ‘How if you was to go up in de tree den?’

“‘A’ right,’ ses Hahsie, like he’s doin’ de bigges’ kind of a favour. ‘I’ll have a try, anyhow,’ ses he, like he ain’t so sure he can do it. But he gi’es a hop, a skip, an’ a yump, an’ you can hear him laugh as he land up in dem lower branches like a bird. Den he climb an’ he climb till he’s right up where de nicest peaches is. An’ den—why, den he ’gins to eat ’em.

“‘You should a-hear Ou’ Sculpat shout at dat. ‘Ho yeh!’ ses he, ‘what for you eat dem peaches up dere?’

“‘Cause dey’s nice, what else?’ ses Hahsie. ‘Dey’s about de nicest peaches I ever tasted. Here you is; dis stone now,’ ses he, an’ he drop a peach stone fair on Ou’ Sculpat’s nose. ‘You plant darie stone, an’ by’n’by you’ll have a tree o’ your own to eat off, an’ den you won’t need to dance an’ prance round dis one while you’s watchin’ me eat peaches.’

“Sculpat he fair whistle, he’s dat mad. ‘By gum! You flop right down out o’ dat or I’ll knock de by-gum stuffin’ out o’ you,’ ses he, an’ he yust paw de air. ‘Dem’s my peaches,’ ses he.

“‘Is dey?’ ses Hahsie. ‘Den if dey is I’d advise you to shake yourse’f a bit an’ come up an’ get a few while dere’s some left,’ an’ Hahsie sort o’ smile down at him.

“Ou’ Sculpat he reg’lar stretch his neck down dere on de ground. ‘You’s smart,’ ses he, ‘almighty smart; but I know what I’ll do. You yust stop up dere an’ see if I don’t fix you. You wait a bit, dat’s all,’ an’ he turns an’ he offs back to de spruit, wid Little Hahsie singin’ a song to him as far as he can hear him, about how nice it is to eat peaches in de tree.

“But it ain’t no time at all ’fore here comes Ou’ Sculpat back agen, an’ de hool gang o’ de sculpats wid him. An’ dey make no mo’ to do, but dey marches right up to de tree an’ ’gins to bite it round to cut it down. ‘Now we’s got you,’ ses Sculpat. ‘We’ll see how you like it when we get hold o you.’

“‘When you get hold o’ me,’ ses Hahsie. ‘Fire away den,’ an’ he yust keep on a-eatin’ peaches like dat’s what he was born doin’.

“By’n’by de tree’s mighty near cut troo, an’ by dat time dere ain’t one peach left. Little Hahsie’s eat de last one. ‘Dat’s a’ right,’ ses Sculpat. ‘But I’s yust a-gun’ to knock dem peaches out o’ you agen now, wid all de rest o’ de by-gum stuffin’.’

“Den car-r-rack! goes de tree, an’ it ’gin to swing dis way an’ dat way, an’ all de sculpats stand ready to ketch Little Hahsie. Den cur-rack-rack sounds de tree an’ down it come; but, yust as it’s a-fallin’, dere’s Little Hahsie, dar soh! away out yonder. For he gi’en one fair ole winger of a yump, an’ he land far out de yonder side de ring o’ sculpats, an’ dere he goes now a-streakin’ over de rise an’ out o’ sight. ‘Who’s a-knockin’ de stuffin’ out o’ who now?’ ses he, as he send de heel dust a-flyin’ behind him.

“But de sculpats dey ain’t done yet. Dey’s too mad to gi’e up so easy as dat. ‘I know what he’ll do,’ ses Ou’ Sculpat. ‘He’s yust so full o’ peaches he’ll squat right down dere over de rise an’ go to sleep. So we’ll do dis; we’ll get round him in a great big ring a mile wide, an’ den when he ’gins to run agen we’ll keep a-poppin’ up an’ a-poppin’ up everywhere he stops, till he’ll yust run on till he drops. Den we has him.’

“‘Dat’s yust what we’ll do,’ ses all de sculpats. An’ right dere dey start to do it.

“Well, Little Hahsie was a-sleepin’ on de yonder side de ridge, where he’d squotted down, when up pops Ou’ Sculpat, yust dat close dat dere ain’t no time for foolin’ or anytin’ but gettin’ away. But Hahsie flick up his heels an’ laugh as he go. ‘Why don’t you ketch me?’ ses he.

“Ou’ Sculpat grin, but he don’t say nawtin’. He yust flop down in de grass agen an’ wait.

“In a while Klein Hahsie rinks he’s run fur enough, but he hadn’t more’n stop ’fore up pops anoder sculpat a-comin’ at him.

“‘Hello!’ ses Hahsie. ‘Here a’ready, is you? Allah Crachty! how you manage dat?’ But de sculpat keep a-comin’ on, an’ Hahsie has to off agen, an’ dis time he don’t flick his heels.

“Well, de same ring happen once an’ de same ring happen twice, an’ it went on like dat till Little Hahsie was dat near done for dat de sculpat’s ’gin to close in on him. ‘Now we’s got you,’ ses dey.

“‘Has you?’ ses Hahsie, an’ he look round, an’ dere he sees a dead elephant lyin’ in de grass. ‘Dat’s de ting,’ ses he, an’ he makes a dive an’ he pops right inside dat elephant, troo his mouf.

“Now dat elephant was all swelled up wid bein’ two days dead, an’ when Little Hahsie dives

inside it, head fust it set up such a morion an' commotion dat it look like de elephant's a-gun' to roll over an' get up on to his four big legs. De trunk lift up, an' de top ear wag, an' de sculpats all rink, by jimminy, darie elephant's de liv'est elephant dey's seen dis many a day.

“Run now!” shouts de sculpats. ‘Darie elephant's Klein Hahsie's daddy, an' he's a-gun' to get up an' tromp us to smash! Get away now!’ ses dey.

“Little Hahsie, inside, he hear all dat, an' he fair 'gun to ramp about in dat elephant, an' he shout outen his trunk like billy-o, an' it made dat big a row, an' dat big a wiggle, dat you hain't never seen no sculpats ever doin' no sich a gettin' away as dey did. 'Fore dat time dey used to have hair on 'em like a otter, but dey went dat far an' dey went dat fas'—for sculpats—troo de bush an' de stones an' de grass, dat dey wear all de hair off n 'em, till dey get's quite smooove an' polish like you sees 'em now.

“An' dat's why de sculpats is got no hair on 'em,” concluded the old Hottentot, with all the dignity of a learned professor to his class.

Why the Ratel is so Keen on Honey

The children were accompanying Old Hendrik from the tobacco lands to the mealie lands farther out, and on the way, in crossing the broken, bush-grown spruit between, the eldest boy marked a fresh earth of the Ratel or honey-badger. “Dat’s bad to see if we don’t do sometin’,” said Old Hendrik. “Dere’ll be mighty little honey on dis place ’fore long if we don’t drop on to Mr Ratel.”

“But, Ou’ Ta’,” demanded Annie, “why is the Ratel always after the honey?”

“Well, Ainkye,” answered Old Hendrik gravely, “it’s ’cause it’s in de blood. Some folk ses it’s dis way an’ some ses it’s dat way but as soon as Ou’ Ratel sees ’em comin’ to ax, he fair dives into diggin’, an’ he’s half-way down to Dublin, as your mammy ses, ’fore dey comes to where he started f’om. It ain’t dat dese hyer Ratels ain’t proud o’ de reason, ’cause dey tinks it was mighty smart o’ deir granddaddy. It’s yust dey rinks nobody knows, an’ so dey won’t tell.

“But I knows, ’cause my ole granddaddy tole me, an’ it happen in his granddaddy’s time. You see it was de granddaddy of all dese yere Ratels, an it was when he was a young kerel in his daddy’s house. Dere ain’t no doubt he was slim, baiah slim, an’ he was yust dat gone on honey dat he even played tricks on his ole daddy, till at last he tried on dat about de sack o’ honey an’ de honey-gum tree. Den—well, you listen.

“Dis young Seeunkie Ratel was de sort dat his mammy was al’ays a-fallin’ out wid his daddy over him, reckonin’ his daddy was al’ays a-tinkin’ he was up to some skellumness or other. An I reckon myse’f dat de ole man know’d. However, de ole man had a big goatskin chock full o’ de finest honey, an’ he kep’ it under de bed in de sleepin’ chamber, so it ’ud be nice an handy—an’ safe. In a mawnin’ dey’d all get up, an de ole daddy he’d go out an’ have a look round, an’ de ole mammy she’d be busy a-gettin’ de breakfas’ ready, while little missy Wilhelmina Ratel she’d play about, inside or outside or underfoot, yust like little girls does when deir mammies is busy. An’ all dis time young Seeunkie Ratel he’d be—well—dat’s when de honey ’ud be doin’ de dis-appearin’.

“What he used to do was to wait till de rest was outside or in de eatin’ room, an’ den he’d sneak back into de sleepin’ chamber, pull out his knife, snick a chunk o’ dis sugary honey out o’ de bag, slip it into his pocket an’ off out to have a look round too, ’fore breakfas’. Dat’s when he’d scoff dis chunk o’ honey.

“Well, de ole daddy he sees his honey lookin’ less an’ less every day, an’ he scratch his head an’ he say to his wife: ‘Mammy,’ ses he, ‘dat’s mighty funny about dat honey. It’s a-goin’ somewheres.’

“‘Well,’ ses she, ‘what you expect? You let dat good-for-nuffin’ Wilhelmina play about yust as she likes an’ do what she likes, an’ yet you won’t never b’lieve nawtin’ I tells you about her. I

know'd she'd be in some mischief soon,' ses she, for Ole Missis Ratel was one o' dese women what's all for deir skellum of a boy, an' so de daddy has to be good to de little girl hisse'f.

“Well, ole daddy he sit down an' he tink an' tink, an' old mammy she go out an' ketch hold o' little Wilhelmina an' spank an' spank, but young Seeunkie he stays out on de veldt an' smack an' smack his lips on de honey, an' keep de tail o' one eye over his shoulder to watch if his daddy's comin'.

“Tings went on a-dis way den, till one mawnin' at breakfas' dey had a pretty good ole breakfas', an' by de time dey'd finis' de ole daddy was a-feelin' yust right an' comfy, an' he lean back in his chair an' pulls out half a yard o' yuicy ole to'acco. ‘Len' your ole daddy your knife for a minute, Seeunkie,’ ses he.

“Young Seeunkie tink no mo' about it, but dives down in his pocket an' haul out his knife an' lifts it over. But he hadn't no mo' dan stretch it out 'fore he feels de honey sticky on it, yust as de ole daddy grips his fingers on it. De yoke's on his neck now, tinks Seeunkie, as he looks at his daddy, but he never lets on yust yet.

“Oom Ratel gets de knife open 'fore de sticky feelin' strikes him. Den he looks down at de blade an' de joints of it an' den he looks up at young Seeunkie an' de cheeks of him, an'—well, he gets up an' grabs dat young burgher by de scruff. ‘So it's you bin steal all dat honey, is it?’

ses he. ‘Yust what I t’ought a’ready.’

“‘Dere you is agen,’ shouts de ole fool mammy. ‘Blamin’ him ’fore you knows if it’s true or not. You ain’t ask him what he’s got to say.’

“‘Dere ain’t no need for any say in it,’ ses ole daddy. ‘Dere’s de honey on his knife to do all de sayin’.’

“‘But dat ain’t honey at all;’ ses Seeunkie, bold as brass now his mammy’s up. ‘Dat’s yust sweet honey-gum. I found a tree o’ sweet gum yestiday down by de spruit.’

“‘Sweet gum!’ ses Oom Ratel. ‘I’s lived a bit longer an’ seen a bit mo’ dan you, Seeunkie, but I ain’t never seen any sweet gum tree nor heerd o’ one yet.’

“‘Well, you’s seen an’ heerd o’ sweet gum now,’ snaps dat ole fool mammy; ‘an’ dat on’y shows how much smarter he is dan you. You let him go, an’ he’ll show you de tree a’ right enough.’

“‘Yes, I will,’ ses Seeunkie, as sa’cy as a new ticky.

“‘Right den,’ ses de ole daddy. ‘I’s yust a-goin’ round de koppie now, an’ as soon as I’m back

you'll ha' to show me dis sweet gum tree, or else I'll knock some gum out o' you.'

“So off goes Oom Ratel round de koppie, an' den young Seeunkie looks at his mammy, an' his mammy looks at him. ‘What'll you do now, Seeunkie?’ ses she.

“‘Go an' show him de tree,’ ses Seeunkie. ‘You lend me anoder knife now, an' you'll see.’

“Well, she lend him dis knife, an' off he pops an' down to de spruit. Dere he pick out a nice young t'orn tree standin' by itself, one dat hain't got many gum cracks on it, an' he set to work like billy-o to scrape off every bit o' dat gum an' leave de spots bare. An' when he couldn't see not de glisten o' one speck left, den he goes back home an' waits for de ole daddy.

“Well, an' here comes in Oom Ratel. ‘Ready to show me dat tree now?’ ses he.

“‘I is,’ ses Seeunkie. ‘Come dis way an' I'll show you.’

“So off dey pops an' comes to de tree. ‘Dat's de tree, daddy,’ ses Seeunkie. ‘See how clean I scraped it till dere ain't none left, it was dat good.’

“Oom Ratel he look at de tree an' he see de bare spots, an' he try to scrape de cracks wid his

nails to taste it. But young Seeunkie's scraped too clean for dat, an' so de ole daddy has to turn round an' look at him. 'An' when's dis tree goin' to ha' some more honey on it?' ses he.

“Well, it's of a mawnin' de honey's out,' ses Seeunkie. 'Dere has to be de sun on it all day, an' den at night de stuff runs. To-morro' mawnin's de time den.'"

“A' right,' ses ole daddy. 'To-morro' mawnin' you leave dis tree alone till I comes. Don't you dah to touch it 'fore I sees it. Den we'll see,' ses he.

“Well, p'r'aps you tink dat 'ud set young Seeunkie to studyin' hard. But not him; he yust stalks back wid his ole daddy, hands in pockets an' mouf in a whistle, like a location Kaffir wid new yalla boots on. It ain't no sort o' trouble to him to plan skellum; it yust come nat'ral to him.

“When dey gets home young Seeunkie grins at his mammy, but Oom Ratel he goes out agen on business. An dis time he takes de honey sack wid him, for he's got a plan an' he's yust a-startin' to work it. But he hain't got nawtin sure yet to say to his missis one way or anoder as he goes out. She has. She ses it too. 'Didn't I tole you!' ses she.

“Next mawnin' Oom Ratel gets all his goin's out done 'fore breakfas', so as he'll be ready for dis honey tree first ting ahter it. But young Seeunkie he goes out too on his own account, on'y he first cuts anoder chunk o' honey out of his ole daddy's goatskin under de bed, an' takes dat

wid him, an' as soon as he gets to de young mimosa he scrapes de gum spots clean agen an' daubs 'em all fresh wid honey. Den he sneaks home an' smiles to hisse'f all troo breakfas' time.

“Well, ahter breakfas' Oom Ratel he ses. ‘Come on,’ an' de young Seeunkie he ses, ‘A' right,’ an' off dey pops down to de honey-gum tree. Sure enough, dere's de honey an' dere's de ole daddy a-tastin' it an' a-sayin' what mighty good stuff it is.

“‘Well,’ ses de young fella, ‘I tole you all de time, but you wouldn't b'lieve me. An' now what?’ ses he.

“‘Oh, now everytin's all right,’ ses de ole daddy grinnin'. ‘An' here you is, Seeunkie, I's brought dis,’ ses he, pullin' out a big new goatskin sack. ‘You scrape off all dat honey-gum now onto a big leaf for your ole daddy to eat an' den you can stop here wid dis sack an' keep on scrapin' every mawnin' till you gets it full.’

“‘Oh, but,’ ses young Seeunkie, ‘it'll take so long to fill dat!’

“‘Oh, dat's all right,’ ses his ole daddy, all a-smilin'. ‘In de daytime you can dig yourse'f a little house, an' your sister Wilhelmina can bring you some scoff every mawnin', an' you'll yust have a fine ole time wid no ole daddy to boss you.’

“Well, wasn’t young Seeunkie s’prise, an’ didn’t he sniff an’ he snivel. But it ain’t no use, he ha’ to stop. An’ when it come ahternoon too, an’ he go up home an’ he howl an he prow, it still ain’t no manner o’ use eeder, for de ole man just pops out ahter him an’ shambok him away agen.

“Now, what’s all dat for?’ scream ole Missis Ratel. ‘Didn’t he show you de tree, an hain’t you eat de sweet gum yourse’f?’

“I did,’ ses ole Ratel. ‘Dat’s yust it. If I hadn’t a-eat it I mightn’t a-know’d. But I put rock aloes yuice on de honey dat was in de bag under de bed last night, an’ dis sweet gum f’m de t’orn tree was yust a-stingin’ wid aloes yuice dis mawnin’. If young Seeunkie’s smart enough to steal his daddy’s honey, an’ try to fool him, den he’s big enough an’ smart enough to look out for hisse’f f’m now on. Dere’s lots o’ country out o’ doors for him to dig in.’

“Well, ole Missis Ratel she rage an’ she ramp, but it ain’t no manner o’ use. De ole man stick to what he say, an’ young Seeunkie hatto go, all ’cause he couldn’t leave any honey alone, not even his ole daddy’s.

“So,” concluded the old Hottentot, “now you knows why de Ratel is yust so dead gone on honey—it’s in de blood, an’ you cahnt get dat out nohow. An’ ahter dat, don’t you Kleinkies

ever go stealin' your ole daddy's honey, else you'll be gettin' de same way." With which debatable threat Old Hendrik resumed his course to the mealie lands beyond.

The Place and the People

It was winter in the Great Karroo. The evening air was so crisp and cutting that one seemed to hear the crick-crack of the frost, as it formed on the scant vegetation. A skraal windje blew from the distant mountains, bringing with it a mingled odour of karroo-bush, sheep-kraals, and smoke from the Kafir huts—none, perhaps, desirable in itself, but all so blent and purified in that rare, clear atmosphere, and so subservient to the exhilarating freshness, that Pietie van der Merwe took several sniffs of pleasure as he peered into the pale moonlight over the lower half of the divided door. Then, with a little involuntary shiver, he closed the upper portion and turned to the ruddy warmth of the purring fire, which Willem was feeding with mealie-cobs from the basket beside him.

Little Jan sat in the corner of the wide, old-fashioned rustbank, his large grey eyes gazing wistfully into the red heart of the fire, while his hand absently stroked Torry, the fox terrier, curled up beside him.

Mother, in her big Madeira chair at the side table, yawned a little over her book; for, winter or summer, the mistress of a karroo farm leads a busy life, and the end of the day finds her ready for a well-earned rest.

Pietie held his hands towards the blaze, turning his head now and again towards the door at the

far end of the room. Presently this opened and father appeared, comfortably and leisurely, as if such things as shearing, dipping, and ploughing were no part of his day's work. Only the healthy tan, the broad shoulders, the whole well-developed physique proclaimed his strenuous, open-air life. His eye rested with pleasure on the scene before him—the bright fire, throwing gleam and shadow on painted wall and polished woodwork, and giving a general air of cosiness to everything; the table spread for the evening meal; the group at the fireside; and his dear helpmate who was responsible for the comfort and happiness of his well-appointed home.

He was followed in a moment by Cousin Minnie, the bright-faced young governess. Their coming caused a stir among the children. Little Jan slowly withdrew his gaze from the fire, and, with more energy than might have been expected from his dreamy look, pushed and prodded the sleeping terrier along the rustbank so as to make room for Cousin Minnie.

Pietie sprang to his father's side. "Now may I go and call Outa Karel?" he asked eagerly, and at an acquiescent "Yes, my boy," away he sped.

It was a strange figure that came at his bidding, shuffling, stooping, halting, and finally emerging into the firelight. A stranger might have been forgiven for fleeing in terror, for the new arrival looked like nothing so much as an ancient and muscular gorilla in man's clothes, and walking uncertainly on its hind legs.

He was not quite four feet in height, with shoulders and hips disproportionately broad, and long arms, the hands of which reached midway between knee and ankle. His lower limbs were clothed in nondescript garments fashioned from wildcat and dassie skins; a faded brown coat, which from its size had evidently once belonged to his master, hung nearly to his knees; while, when he removed his shapeless felt hat, a red kopdoek was seen to be wound tightly round his head. No one had ever seen Outa Karel without his kopdoek, but it was reported that the head it covered was as smooth and devoid of hair as an ostrich egg.

His yellow-brown face was a network of wrinkles, across which his flat nose sprawled broadly between high cheekbones; his eyes, sunk far back into his head, glittered dark and beady like the little wicked eyes of a snake peeping from the shadow of a hole in the rocks. His wide mouth twisted itself into an engaging grin, which extended from ear to ear, as, winking and blinking his bright little eyes, he twirled his old hat in his claw-like hands and tried to make obeisance to his master and mistress.

The attempt was unsuccessful on account of the stiffness of his joints, but it never failed to amuse those who, times without number, had seen it repeated. To those who witnessed it for the first time it was something to be remembered—the grotesque, disproportionate form; the ape-like face, that yet was so curiously human; the humour and kindness that gleamed from the cavernous eyes, which seemed designed to express only malevolence and cunning; the long waving arms and crooked fingers; the yellow skin for all the world like a crumpled sheet of india-rubber pulled in a dozen different directions.

That he was a consummate actor, and, not to put too fine a point on it, an old humbug of the first water, goes without saying, for these characteristics are inherent in the native nature. But in spite of this, and the uncanniness of his appearance, there was something about Outa Karel that drew one to him. Of his real devotion to his master and the “beautiful family Van der Merwe,” there could be no question; while, above everything, was the feeling that here was one of an outcast race, one of the few of the original inhabitants who had survived the submerging tide of civilization; who, knowing no law but that of possession, had been scared and chased from their happy hunting grounds, first by the Hottentots, then by the powerful Bantu, and later by the still more terrifying palefaced tribes from over the seas. Though the origin of the Bushman is lost in the mists of antiquity, the Hottentot conquest of him is a matter of history, and it is well known that the victors were in the habit, while killing off the men, to take unto themselves wives from among the women of the vanquished race. Hence the fact that a perfect specimen of a Bushman is a rara avis, even in the localities where the last remnants are known to linger.

Outa Karel could hardly be called a perfect specimen of the original race, for, though he always spoke of himself as wholly Bushman, there was a strong strain of the Hottentot about him, chiefly noticeable in his build.

He spoke in Dutch, in the curiously expressive voice belonging to these people, just now honey-sweet with the deference he felt for his superiors.

“Ach toch! Night, Baas. Night, Nooi. Night, Nonnie and my little baasjes. Excuse that this old Bushman does not bend to greet you; the will is there, but his knees are too stiff. Thank you, thank you, my baasje,” as Pietie dragged a low stool, covered with springbok skin, from under the desk in the recess and pushed it towards him. He settled himself on it slowly and carefully, with much creaking of joints and many strange native ejaculations.

The little group had arranged itself anew. Cousin Minnie was in the cosy corner of the rustbank near the wall, little Jan next her with his head against her, and Torry’s head on his lap—this attention to make up for his late seeming unkindness in pushing him away.

Pappa, with his magazine, was at the other end of the rustbank where he could, if he chose, speak to Mamma in a low tone, or peep over to see how her book was getting on. Willem had pushed the basket away so as to settle himself more comfortably against Cousin Minnie’s knee as he sat on the floor, and Pietie was on a small chair just in front of the fire.

The centre of attention was the quaint old native, who, having relegated his duties to his children and grandchildren, lived as a privileged pensioner in the van der Merwe family he had served so faithfully for three generations. The firelight played over his quaint figure with the weirdest effect, lighting up now one portion of it, now another, showing up his astonishingly small hands and crooked fingers, as he pointed and gesticulated incessantly—for these people speak as much by gesture as by sound—and throwing exaggerated shadows on the wall.

This was the hour beloved by the children, when the short wintry day had ended, and, in the interval between the coming of darkness and the evening meal, their dear Outa Karel was allowed in to tell them stories.

And weird and wonderful stories they were—tales of spooks and giants, of good and bad spirits, of animals that talked, of birds, beasts and insects that exercised marvellous influence over the destinies of unsuspecting mankind. But most thrilling of all, perhaps, were Outa Karel's personal experiences—adventures by veld and krantz with lion, tiger, jackal and crocodile, such as no longer fall to the lot of mortal man.

The children would listen, wide-eyed and breathless, and even their elders, sparing a moment's attention from book or writing, would feel a tremor of excitement, unable to determine where reality ended and fiction began, so inextricably were they intermingled as this old Iago of the desert wove his romances.

“Now, Outa, tell us a nice story, the nicest you know,” said little Jan, nestling closer to Cousin Minnie, and issuing his command as the autocrat of the “One Thousand and One Nights” might have done.

“Ach! but klein baas, this stupid old black one knows no new stories, only the old ones of Jakhals and Leeuw, and how can he tell even those when his throat is dry—ach, so dry with the

dust from the kraals?”

He forced a gurgling cough, and his small eyes glittered expectantly. Then suddenly he started with well-feigned surprise and beamed on Pietie, who stood beside him with a soopje in the glass kept for his especial use.

This was a nightly performance. The lubrication was never forgotten, but it was often purposely delayed in order to see what pretext Outa would use to call attention to the fact of its not having been offered. Sore throat, headache, stomach-ache, cold, heat, rheumatism, old age, a birthday (invented for the occasion), the killing of a snake or the breaking-in of a young horse—anything served as an excuse for what was a time-honoured custom.

“Thank you, thank you, mij klein koning. Gezondheid to Baas, Nooi, Nonnie, and the beautiful family van der Merwe.” He lifted the glass, gulped down the contents, and smacked his lips approvingly. “Ach! if a Bushman only had a neck like an ostrich! How good would the soopje taste all the way down! Now I am strong again; now I am ready to tell the story of Jakhals and Oom Leeuw.”

“About Oom Leeuw carrying Jakhals on his back?” asked Willem.

“No, baasje. This is quite a different one.”

And with many strange gesticulations, imitating every action and changing his voice to suit the various characters, the old man began:

How Jakhals Fed Oom Leeuw

“One day in the early morning, before any people were awake, Jakhals was prowling round and prowling round, looking for something to eat. Jakhals is not fond of hunting for himself. Oh, no! he likes to wait till the hunt is over, so that he can share in the feast without having had any of the work. He had just dragged himself quietly to the top of a kopje—so, my baasjes, so—with his stomach close to the ground, and his ears moving backwards and forwards”—Outa’s little hands, on either side of the kopdoek, suited the action to the word—“to hear the least sound. Then he looked here, he looked there, he looked all around, and yes, truly! whom do you think he saw in the kloof below? No other than Oom Leeuw himself, clawing a nice big hamel he had just killed—a Boer hamel, baasjes, with a beautiful fat tail. Oh yes, Oom Leeuw had picked out a good one.

“‘Arré!’ thought Jakhals, ‘this is luck,’ and he sat still for a minute, wondering how he could get some of the nice meat for himself. He soon made a plan. A white thing fluttered in a little bush near him. It was a piece of paper. He picked it up and folded it—so—and so—and so—” the crooked fingers were very busy—“till it looked like a letter. Then he ran down the kopje in a great hurry and called out, ‘Good morning, Oom.’

“‘Morning, Neef.’

“‘I see Oom has killed a Boer hamel.’

“‘Yes, Neef, a big fat one.’

“‘Well, here is a letter from Tante,’ said Jakhals, giving the piece of paper to Leeuw. ‘As I was passing she asked me to give it to Oom.’

“Leeuw took it and turned it this way, that way. He held it far from him, he held it close to his eyes, but he couldn’t make it out at all. See, baasjes, Leeuw was one of the old-fashioned sort. He grew up before there were so many schools and good teachers”—here Outa’s bright eyes winked and blinked flatteringly on Cousin Minnie and her pupils—“he was not clever; he could not read. But he didn’t want anyone to know it, so he said:

“‘Jakhals, Oom has forgotten his spectacles; you had better read it out.’”

“‘Hm, hm, hm,’ said Jakhals, pretending to read. ‘Tante says Oom must kill a nice fat Boer hamel and send it home at once by me. She and the children are hungry.’

“‘Well, that’s all right. Here is the very thing. Tante is not very well. The Jew smouse’s donkey she ate the other day disagreed with her, so we must coax her a little. I don’t want to say

anything, but you know a vrouwmens is a dangerous thing when she is in a temper. So you had better take this hamel to her at once, and then you can have the offal for your trouble.”

“Thank you, noble Oom, King of Beasts,” said Jakhals in a fawning voice, promising himself at the same time that he would have something more than the offal. ‘How fortunate am I, poor humble creature, to have the King for my uncle,’ and off he trotted with the sheep.

“Leeuw prowled further up the kloof, waving his tail from side to side.” Had Outa had a tail he would have wagged it, but, as he had not, his right arm was slowly flourished to and fro to give point to his description. “Here comes a little Steenbokje on its way to a veld dam for water. Ach! but it is pretty! It looks here, it looks there, with its large soft eyes. One little front foot is in the air; now it is down; the other goes up; down again. On it comes, slowly, slowly”—Outa’s hands, bunched up to resemble the buck’s feet, illustrated each step, the children following his movements with breathless interest. “Now it stops to listen.” Outa was rigid as he bent forward to catch the least sound. Suddenly he started violently, and the children involuntarily did the same. “Hark! what was that? What is coming? Ach! how Steenbokje skriks and shivers! A terrible form blocks the way! Great eyes—cruel eyes burn him with their fire. Now he knows. It is Leeuw!—Leeuw who stands in the path! He growls and glares at Steenbokje. Steenbokje cannot turn away. They stare at each other—so—just so—” Outa glares at each fascinated child in turn. “Steenbokje cannot look away, cannot move. He is stiff with fright. His blood is cold. His eyes are starting out of his head. And then—voops!”—the listeners jump as Outa’s long arms suddenly swoop towards them—“one spring and Leeuw is on him. Steenbokje blares—

meh, meh, meh—but it is no good. Leeuw tears him and claws him. Tip, tip, tip, the red blood drips down; s-s-s-s-s, it runs out like a stream, and Leeuw licks it up. There lies pretty little Steenbokje, dead, dead.” Outa’s voice trails away faintly.

The children heave big sighs. Little Jan’s grey eyes are full of tears. The old native’s graphic description has made them feel as though they had been watching round a death-bed.

“Yes, baasjes, Leeuw killed Steenbokje there in the kloof. He tore the skin off—skr-r-r—and bit through the bones—skrnch, skrnch, skrnch—and ate little Steenbokje for his breakfast. Then he went to the krantzies to sleep, for the day was coming and the light began to hurt his eyes.

“When he awoke it was evening, and he felt refreshed and rather hungry. My baasjes know a steenbokje is nothing for a meal for Oom Leeuw. But before hunting again he thought he would go home and see how Tante and the children were getting on, and whether they had feasted well on the nice fat hamel.

“But, dear land! What did poor Oom Leeuw find? The children crying, Tante spluttering and scratching with rage, everything upside down, and not even the bones of the hamel to be seen.

““Ohé! ohé! ohé!” cried Tante. ‘The bad, wicked Jakhals! Ach, the low, veld dog!’

“‘But what is the matter?’ asked Leeuw. ‘Where is Jakhals?’

“‘Where is he? How should I know? He has run off with the nice fat hamel, and me—yes, me, the King’s wife—has he beaten with the entrails! Ohé! Ohé!’

“‘And boxed my ears!’ cried one of the cubs. ‘Wah! wah! wah!’

“‘And pinched my tail,’ roared the other. ‘Weh! weh! weh!’

“‘And left us nothing but the offal. Oh, the cunning, smooth-tongued vagabond!’

“‘And all three fell to weeping and wailing, while Leeuw roared aloud in his anger.

“‘Wait a bit, I’ll get him,’ he said. ‘Before the world wakes to-morrow he’ll see who’s baas.’

“‘He waved his tail to and fro and stuck out his strong claws. His eyes glared like fire in a dark kloof when there is no moon, and when he brulled it was very terrible to hear—hoor-r-r-r-r, hoor-r-r-r-r,’” and Outa gave vent to several deep, blood-curdling roars.

“Very early the next morning, when only a little grey in the sky shewed that the night was rolling round to the other side of the world, Leeuw took his strongest sjambok and started off to look for Jakhals. He spied him at last on the top of a krantz sitting by a fire with his wife and children.

“‘Ah! there you are, my fine fellow,’ he thought. ‘Well and happy are you? But wait, I’ll soon show you!’

“He began at once to try and climb the krantz, but it was very steep and high, and so smooth that there was nothing for him to hold to. Every time he got up a little way, his claws just scratched along the hard rock and he came sailing down again. At last he thought, ‘Well, as I can’t climb up, I’ll pretend to be nice and friendly, and then perhaps Jakhals will come down. I’ll ask him to go hunting with me.’”

Here Outa’s beady little eyes danced mischievously. “Baasjes know, the only way to get the better of a schelm is to be schelm, too. When anyone cheats, you must cheat more, or you will never be baas. Ach, yes! that is the only way.”

(Cousin Minnie would not disturb the course of the tale, but she mentally prescribed and stored up for future use an antidote to this pagan and wordly-wise piece of advice to her pupils.)

“So Leeuw stood at the foot of the krantz and called out quite friendly and kind, ‘Good

morning, Neef Jakhals.’

“‘Morning, Oom.’

“‘I thought you might like to go hunting with me, but I see you are busy.’

“‘At any other time Jakhals would have skipped with delight, for it was very seldom he had the honour of such an invitation, but now he was blown up with conceit at having cheated Oom and Tante Leeuw so nicely.

“‘Thank you, Oom, but I am not in want of meat just now. I’m busy grilling some nice fat mutton chops for breakfast. Won’t you come and have some, too?’

“‘Certainly, with pleasure, but this krantz is so steep—how can I get up?’

“‘Ach! that’s quite easy, Oom. I’ll pull you up in an eye-wink. Here, vrouw, give me a nice thick riem. That old rotten one that is nearly rubbed through,’ he said in a whisper to his wife.

“‘So Mrs. Jakhals, who was as slim as her husband, brought the bad riem, and they set to work to pull Oom Leeuw up. ‘Hoo-ha! hoo-ha!’ they sang as they slowly hauled away.

“When he was about ten feet from the ground, Jakhals called out, ‘Arré! but Oom is heavy,’ and he pulled the riem this way and that way along the sharp edge of the krantz”—Outa vigorously demonstrated—“till it broke right through and—kabloops!—down fell Oom Leeuw to the hard ground below.

“‘Oh! my goodness! What a terrible fall! I hope Oom is not hurt. How stupid can a vrouwmens be! To give me an old riem when I called for the best! Now, here is a strong one. Oom can try again.’

“So Leeuw tried again, and again, and again, many times over, but each time the rope broke and each time his fall was greater, because Jakhals always pulled him up a little higher, and a little higher. At last he called out:

“‘It’s very kind of you, Jakhals, but I must give it up.’

“‘Ach! but that’s a shame!’ said Jakhals, pretending to be sorry. ‘The carbonaatjes are done to a turn, and the smell—alle wereld! it’s fine! Shall I throw Oom down a piece of the meat?’

“‘Yes please, Jakhals,’ said Leeuw eagerly, licking his lips. ‘I have a big hole inside me and some carbonaatjes will fill it nicely.’

“Ach! my baasjes, what did cunning Jakhals do? He carefully raked a red-hot stone out of the fire and wrapped a big piece of fat round it. Then he peered over the edge of the krantz and saw Leeuw waiting impatiently.

“‘Now Oom,’ he called, ‘open your mouth wide and I’ll drop this in. It’s such a nice big one, I bet you won’t want another.’

“And when he said this, Jakhals chuckled, while Mrs. Jakhals and the little ones doubled up with silent laughter at the great joke.

“‘Are you ready, Oom?’

“‘Grr-r-r-r!’ gurgled Leeuw. He had his mouth wide open to catch the carbonaatje, and he would not speak for fear of missing it.

“Jakhals leaned over and took aim. Down fell the tit-bit and—sluk! sluk!—Leeuw had swallowed it.

“And then, my baasjes, there arose such a roaring and raving and groaning as had not been heard since the hills were made. The dassies crept along the rocky ledges far above, and peeped

timidly down; the circling eagles swooped nearer to find out the cause; the meerkats and ant-bears, the porcupines and spring-hares snuggled further into their holes; while the frightened springboks and elands fled swiftly over the plain to seek safety in some other veld.

“Only wicked Jakhals and his family rejoiced. With their bushy tails waving and their pointed ears standing up, they danced round the fire, holding hands and singing over and over:

“Arré! who is stronger than the King of Beastland?

Arré! who sees further than the King of Birdland?

Who but thick-tailed Jakhals, but the Silver-maned One?

He, the small but sly one; he, the wise Planmaker.

King of Beasts would catch him; catch him, claw him, kill him!

Ha! ha! ha! would catch him! Ha! ha! ha! would kill him!

But he finds a way out; grills the fat-tailed hamel,

Feeds the King of Beastland with the juicy tit-bits;

Eats the fat-tailed hamel while the King lies dying;

Ha! ha! ha! lies dying! Ha! ha! ha! lies dead now!”

Outa crooned the Jakhals’ triumph song in a weird monotone, and on the last words his voice quavered out, leaving a momentary silence among the small folk.

Pietie blinked as though the firelight were too much for his eyes. Little Jan sighed tumultuously. Willem cleared his throat.

“But how did Jakhals know that Oom Leeuw was dead?” he asked suddenly.

“He peeped over the krantz every time between the dancing and singing—like this, baasje, just like this.” Outa’s eyes, head and hands were at work. “The first time he looked, he saw Oom Leeuw rolling over and over; the next time Leeuw was scratching, scratching at the rocky krantz; then he was digging into the ground with his claws; then he was only blowing himself out—so—with long slow breaths; but the last time he was lying quite still, and then Jakhals knew.”

“Oh! I didn’t want poor Steenbokje to die,” said little Jan. “He was such a pretty little thing. Outa, this is not one of your nicest stories.”

“It’s all about killing,” said Pietie. “First Leeuw killed poor Steenbokje, who never did him any harm, and then Jakhals killed Oom Leeuw, who never did him any harm. It was very cruel and wicked.”

“Ach yes, baasjes,” explained Outa, apologetically, “we don’t know why, but it is so. Sometimes the good ones are killed and the bad ones grow fat. In this old world it goes not always so’s it must go; it just go so’s it goes.”

“But,” persisted Pietie, “you oughtn’t to have let Jakhals kill Oom Leeuw. Oom Leeuw was much stronger, so he ought to have killed naughty Jakhals.”

Outa’s eyes gleamed pityingly. These young things! What did they know of the ups and downs of a hard world where the battle is not always to the strong, nor the race to the swift?

“But, my baasje, Outa did not make up the story. He only put in little bits, like the newspaper and the spectacles and the Jew smouse, that are things of to-day. But the real story was made long, long ago, perhaps when baasje’s people went about in skins like the Rooi Kafirs, and Outa’s people were still monkeys in the bushveld. It has always been so, and it will always be

so—in the story and in the old wicked world. It is the head, my baasjes, the head,” he tapped his own, “and not the strong arms and legs and teeth, that makes one animal master over another. Ach yes! if the Bushman’s head had been the same as the white man’s, arré! what a fight there would have been between them!”

And lost in the astonishing train of thought called up by this idea, he sat gazing out before him with eyes which saw many strange things. Then, rousing himself, with a quick change of voice and manner, “Ach! please, Nooi!” he said in a wheedling tone, “a span of tobacco—just one little span for to-night and to-morrow.”

His mistress laughed indulgently, and, unhooking the bunch of keys from her belt, handed them to Cousin Minnie. “The old sinner!” she said. “We all spoil him, and yet who could begin to be strict with him now? Only a small piece, Minnie.”

“Thank you, thank you, my Nonnie,” said the old man, holding out both hands, and receiving the coveted span as if it were something very precious. “That’s my young lady! Nonnie can have Outa’s skeleton when he is dead. Yes, it will be a fine skeleton for Nonnie to send far across the blue water, where she sent the old long-dead Bushman’s bones. Ach foei! all of him went into a little soap boxie—just to think of it! a soap boxie!”

He started as a young coloured girl made her appearance. “O mij lieve! here is Lys already.

How the time goes when a person is with the baasjes and the noois! Night, Baas; night, Nooi; night, Nonnie and little masters. Sleep well! Ach! the beautiful family Van der Merwe!”

His thanks, farewells and flatteries grew fainter and fainter, and finally died away in the distance, as his granddaughter led him away.

Who was King?

“Once upon a time,” began Outa Karel, and his audience of three looked up expectantly.

“Once upon a time, Oom Leeuw roared and the forest shook with the dreadful sound. Then, from far away over the vlaktes, floated another roar, and the little lion cubs jumped about and stood on their heads, tumbling over each other in their merriment.

“‘Hear,’ they said, ‘it is Volstruis, old Three Sticks. He tries to imitate the King, our father. He roars well. Truly there is no difference.’

“When Leeuw heard this he was very angry, so he roared again, louder than ever. Again came back the sound over the veld, as if it had been an echo.

“‘Ach, no! this will never do,’ thought Leeuw. ‘I must put a stop to this impudence. I alone am King here, and imitators—I want none.’

“So he went forth and roamed over the vlaktes till he met old Three Sticks, the Ostrich. They stood glaring at each other.

“Leeuw’s eyes flamed, his mane rose in a huge mass and he lashed his tail angrily. Volstruis spread out his beautiful wings and swayed from side to side, his beak open and his neck twisting like a whip-snake. Ach! it was pretty, but if baasjes could have seen his eyes! Baasjes know, Volstruis’s eyes are very soft and beautiful—like Nonnie’s when she tells the Bible stories; but now there was only fierceness in them, and yellow lights that looked like fire.

“But there was no fight—yet. It was only their way of meeting. Leeuw came a step nearer and said, ‘We must see who is baas. You, Volstruis, please to roar a little.’

“So Volstruis roared, blowing out his throat, so, ‘Hoo-hoo-hoor-r-r-r!’ It was a fearsome sound—the sort of sound that makes you feel streams of cold water running down your back when you hear it suddenly and don’t know what it is. Yes, baasjes, if you are in bed you curl up and pull the blankets over your head, and if you are outside you run in and get close to the Nooi or Nonnie.”

A slight movement, indicative of contradiction, passed from one to another of his small hearers, but—unless it was a free and easy, conversational evening—they made it a point of honour never to interrupt Outa in full career. This, like other things, could await the finish of the story.

“Then Leeuw roared, and truly the voices were the same. No one could say, ‘This is a bigger voice,’ or ‘That is a more terrifying voice.’ No, they were just equal.

“So Leeuw said to Volstruis, ‘Our voices are alike. You are my equal in roaring. Let it then be so. You will be King of the Birds as I am King of the Beasts. Now let us go hunting and see who is baas there.’

“Out in the vlakke some sassaby were feeding, big fat ones, a nice klompje; so Leeuw started off in one direction and Volstruis in the other, but both kept away from the side the wind came from. Wild bucks can smell—ach toch! so good. Just one little puff when a hunter is creeping up to them, and at once all the heads are in the air—sniff, sniff, sniff—and they are off like the wind. Dust is all you see, and when that has blown away—ach no! there are no bucks; the whole veld is empty, empty!”

Outa stretched out his arms and waved them from side to side with an exaggerated expression of finding nothing but empty space, his voice mournful with a sense of irreparable loss.

“But”—he took up his tale with renewed energy—“Leeuw and Volstruis were old hunters. They knew how to get nearer and nearer without letting the bucks know. Leeuw trailed himself along slowly, slowly, close to the ground, and only when he was moving could you see which was Leeuw and which was sand: the colour was just the same.

“He picked out a big buck, well-grown and fat, but not too old to be juicy, and when he got near enough he hunched himself up very quietly—so, my little masters, just so—ready to spring, and then before you could whistle, he shot through the air like a stone from a catapult, and fell, fair

and square, on to the sassaby's back, his great tearing claws fastened on its shoulders and his wicked teeth meeting in the poor thing's neck.

“Ach! the beautiful big buck! Never again would his pointed horns tear open his enemies! Never again would he lead the herd, or prong in the veld in mating time! Never again would his soft nostrils scent danger in the distance, nor his quick hoofs give the signal for the stampede! No, it was really all up with him this time! When Oom Leeuw gets hold of a thing, he doesn't let go till it is dead.

“The rest of the herd—ach, but they ran! Soon they were far away, only specks in the distance; all except those that Volstruis had killed. Truly Volstruis was clever! Baasjes know, he can run fast—faster even than the sassaby. So when he saw Leeuw getting ready to spring, he raced upwind as hard as he could, knowing that was what the herd would do. So there he was waiting for them, and didn't he play with them! See, baasjes, he stood just so”—in his excitement Outa rose and struck an attitude—“and when they streaked past him he jumped like this, striking at them with the hard, sharp claws on his old two toes.” Outa hopped about like a fighting bantam, while the children hugged themselves in silent delight.

“Voerts! there was one dead!”—Outa kicked to the right. “Voerts! there was another!”—he kicked to the left—“till there was a klomp of bucks lying about the veld giving their last blare. Yes, old Two Toes did his work well that day.

“When Leeuw came up and saw that Volstruis had killed more than he had, he was not very pleased, but Volstruis soon made it all right.

“Leeuw said, ‘You have killed most, so you rip open and begin to eat.’

“‘Oh no!’ said Volstruis, ‘you have cubs to share the food with, so you rip open and eat. I shall only drink the blood.’

“This put Leeuw in a good humour; he thought Volstruis a noble, unselfish creature. But truly, as I said before, Volstruis was clever. Baasjes see, he couldn’t eat meat; he had no teeth. But he didn’t want Leeuw to know. Therefore he said, ‘You eat; I will only drink the blood.’

“So Leeuw ripped open—sk-r-r-r-r, sk-r-r-r-r—and called the cubs, and they all ate till they were satisfied. Then Volstruis came along in a careless fashion, pecking, pecking as he walked, and drank the blood. Then he and Leeuw lay down in the shade of some trees and went to sleep.

“The cubs played about, rolling and tumbling over each other. As they played they came to the place where Volstruis lay.

“‘Aha!’ said one, ‘he sleeps with his mouth open.’

“He peeped into Volstruis’s mouth. ‘Aha!’ he said again, ‘I see something.’

“Another cub came and peeped.

“‘Alle kracht!’ he said, ‘I see something too. Let us go and tell our father.’

“So they ran off in great excitement and woke Leeuw. ‘Come, come quickly,’ they said. ‘Volstruis insults you by saying he is your equal. He lies sleeping under the trees with his mouth wide open, and we have peeped into it, and behold, he has no teeth! Come and see for yourself.’

“Leeuw bounded off quick-quick with the cubs at his tail.

“‘Nier-r-r-r,’ he growled, waking Volstruis, ‘nier-r-r-r. What is the meaning of this? You pretend you are my equal, and you haven’t even got teeth.’

“‘Teeth or no teeth,’ said Volstruis, standing up wide awake, ‘I killed more bucks than you did to-day. Teeth or no teeth, I’ll fight you to show who’s baas.’

“‘Come on,’ said Leeuw. ‘Who’s afraid? I’m just ready for you. Come on!’

“No, wait a little,’ said Volstruis. ‘I’ve got a plan. You see that ant-heap over there? Well, you stand on one side of it, and I’ll stand on the other side, and we’ll see who can push it over first. After that we’ll come out into the open and fight.’

“That seems an all-right plan,’ said Leeuw; and he thought to himself, ‘I’m heavier and stronger; I can easily send the ant-heap flying on to old Three Sticks, and then spring over and kill him.’

“But wait a bit! It was not as easy as he thought. Every time he sprang at the ant-heap he clung to it as he was accustomed to cling to his prey. He had no other way of doing things. And then Volstruis would take the opportunity of kicking high into the air, sending the sand and stones into Leeuw’s face, and making him howl and splutter with rage.

“Sometimes he would stand still and roar, and Volstruis would send a roar back from the other side.

“So they went on till the top of the ant-heap was quite loosened by the kicks and blows. Leeuw was getting angrier and angrier, and he could hardly see—his eyes were so full of dust. He gathered himself together for a tremendous spring, but, before he could make it, Volstruis bounded into the air and kicked the whole top off the ant-heap. Arré, but the dust was thick!

“When it cleared away, there lay Leeuw, groaning and coughing, with the great heap of earth and stones on top of him.

“‘Ohé! ohé!’ wailed the cubs, ‘get up, my father. Here he comes, the Toothless One! He who has teeth only on his feet! Get up and slay him.’

“Leeuw shook himself free of the earth and sprang at Volstruis, but his eyes were full of sand; he could not see properly, so he missed. As he came down heavily, Volstruis shot out his strong right leg and caught Leeuw in the side. Sk-r-r-r-r! went the skin, and goops! goops! over fell poor Oom Leeuw, with Volstruis’s terrible claws—the teeth of old Two Toes—fastened into him.

“Volstruis danced on him, flapping and waving his beautiful black and white wings, and tearing the life out of Oom Leeuw.

“When it was all over, he cleaned his claws in the sand and waltzed away slowly over the veld to where his mate sat on the nest.

“Only the cubs were left wailing over the dead King of the Forest.”

The usual babel of question and comment broke out at the close of the story, till at last Pietie's decided young voice detached itself from the general chatter.

“Outa, what made you say that about pulling the blankets over one's head and running to get near Mammie if one heard Volstruis bellowing at night? You know quite well that none of us would ever do it.”

“Yes, yes, my baasje, I know,” said Outa, soothingly. “I never meant anyone who belongs to the land of Volstruise. But other little masters, who did not know the voice of old Three Sticks—they would run to their mam-mas if they heard him.”

“Oh, I see,” said Pietie, accepting the apology graciously. “I was sure you could not mean a karroo farm boy.”

“Is your story a parable, Outa?” asked little Jan, who had been doing some hard thinking for the last minute.

“Ach! and what is that, my little master?”

“A kind of fable, Outa.”

“Yes, that’s what it is, baasje,” said Outa, gladly seizing on the word he understood, “a fable, a sort of nice little fable.”

“But a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning, and when Cousin Minnie tells us parables she always finds the meaning for us. What is the heavenly meaning of this, Outa?”

Little Jan’s innocent grey eyes were earnestly fixed on Outa’s face, as though to read from it the explanation he sought. For once the old native was nonplussed. He rubbed his red kopdoek, laid a crooked finger thoughtfully against his flat nose, scratched his sides, monkey-fashion, and finally had recourse once more to the kopdoek. But all these expedients failed to inspire him with the heavenly meaning of the story he had just told. Ach! these dear little ones, to think of such strange things! There they all were, waiting for his next words. He must get out of it somehow.

“Baasjes,” he began, smoothly, “there is a beautiful meaning to the story, but Outa hasn’t got time to tell it now. Another time——”

“Outa,” broke in Willem, reprovingly, “you know you only want to get away so that you can go to the old tramp-floor, where the volk are dancing to-night.”

“No, my baasje, truly no!”

“And I wouldn’t be surprised to hear that you had danced, too, after the way you have been jumping about here.”

“Yes, that was fine,” said Pietie, with relish. ““Voerts! there is one dead! Voerts! there is another!’ Outa, you always say you are so stiff, but you can still kick well.”

“Aja, baasje,” returned Outa, modestly; “in my day I was a great dancer. No one could do the Vastrap better—and the Hondekrab—and the Valsrivier. Arré, those were the times!”

He gave a little hop at the remembrance of those mad and merry days, and yet another and another, always towards the passage leading to the kitchen.

“But the meaning, Outa, the heavenly meaning!” cried little Jan. “You haven’t told us.”

“No, my little baas, not to-night. Ask the Nonnie; she will tell you. Here she comes.”

And as Cousin Minnie entered the room, the wily old native, with an agility not to be expected from his cramped and crooked limbs, skipped away, leaving her to bear the brunt of his inability to explain his own story.

Why the Hyena is Lame

“It was Tante Hyena that Jakhals cheated more than anyone,” said Outa. “She always forgot about the last time he had played a trick on her, so she was quite ready to believe him when he came along with another story. Some people are so, my baasjes. P’raps it’s kindness, p’raps it’s only stupidity; Outa doesn’t know.

“One day Jakhals and Hyena were out walking together when a white cloud came up behind the kopjes and floated over the veld quite close to them. It was a nice thick cloud, just like white fat, and Jakhals climbed on to it and sat looking down over the edge. Then he bit pieces out of it, and ate them.

“‘Arré! but this white fat is nice,’ he said. ‘N-yum, n-yum, n-yum,’ and he chewed round the cloud like a caterpillar chews a leaf.

“Hyena licked her lips and looked up at him.

“‘Throw me down some, please,’ she said.

“‘Ach! my Brown Sister, will I then be so greedy as to throw you down little bits? Wait till I get

down, and then I'll help you up to eat for yourself. But come a little nearer so that you can catch me when I jump.'

“So Hyena stood ready, and Jakhals jumped in such a way that he knocked her into the sand. He fell soft, because he was on top, but foei! poor Hyena had all the breath knocked out of her and she was covered with dust.

“‘Ach! but I am clumsy!’ said Jakhals; ‘but never mind, now I’ll help you.’

“So when she had got up and dusted herself, he helped her to climb on to the cloud. There she sat, biting pieces off and eating them, ‘N-yum, n-yum, n-yum, it’s just like white fat!’

“After a time she called out, ‘Grey Brother, I’ve had enough. I want to come down. Please catch me when I jump.’

“‘Ach, certainly Brown Sister, come on. Just see how nicely I’ll catch you. So-o-o.’

“He held out his arms, but just as Hyena jumped he sprang to one side, calling out, ‘Ola! Ola! a thorn has pricked me. What shall I do? what shall I do?’ and he hopped about holding one leg up.

“Whoops! Down fell Brown Sister, and as she fell she put out her left leg to save herself, but it doubled up under her and was nearly broken. She lay in a bundle in the sand, crying, ‘My leg is cracked! my leg is cracked!’

“Jakhals came along very slowly—jump, jump, on three legs. Surely the thorn, that wasn’t there, was hurting him very much!

“‘Oo! oo!’ cried Hyena, ‘help me up, Grey Brother. My leg is broken.’

“‘And mine has a thorn in it. Foei toch, my poor sister! How can the sick help the sick? The only plan is for us to get home in the best way we can. Good-bye, and I will visit you tomorrow to see if you are all right.’

“And off he went—jump, jump, on three legs—very slowly; but as soon as Old Brown Sister could not see him, he put down the other one and—sh-h-h-h—he shot over the veld and got home just in time to have a nice supper of young ducks that Mrs. Jakhals and the children had caught at Oubaas van Niekerk’s dam.

“But poor Brown Sister lay in the sand crying over her sore places, and from that day she walks lame, because her left hind foot is smaller than the right one.”¹

1. The Hyena, on first starting, appears lame in the hind legs—a fact accounted for by the Hottentots in the foregoing fable.

Who was the Thief?

“Yes, my baasjes, so was Oom Jakhals: he always made as if he forgot all about what he had done, and he made as if he thought all the others forgot too, quick-quick. He is maar so schelm.”

Here Outa took full advantage of the pinch of snuff he held between his right forefinger and thumb, sneezed with evident enjoyment two or three times, and continued:

“When Jakhals thought Hyena was quite well, he went to visit her.

“‘It’s very dull here in the veld,’ he said, ‘and food is so scarce, so I’m going to hire myself to a farmer. He’ll give me lots to eat and drink, and when I’m nice and fat I’ll come home again. Would you like to go too, Brown Sister?’

“Hyena smacked her lips when she heard about the nice things to eat. She thought it a very good plan. So they went to a farm, and Jakhals talked so nicely that the farmer hired them both to work for him.

“Ach! it was a beautiful place; lots of chickens and little ducks, and Afrikander sheep with large

fat tails that could be melted out for soap and candles, and eggs, and doves and pigeons—all things that Jakhals liked. He just felt in his stomach that he was going to have a jolly life.

“During the day Jakhals peeped all about, in this corner, in that corner, and he found out where the farmer kept the nice fat that was melted out of the sheep’s tails. In the middle of the night, when all the people were fast asleep, he got up and went quietly, my baasjes, quietly, like a shadow on the ground, to the place where the fat was. He took a big lump and smeared it all over Brown Sister’s tail while she was asleep. Then he ate all that was left—n-yum, n-yum, n-yum—and went to sleep in the waggon-house.

“Early in the morning, when the farmer went out to milk the cows, he missed the fat.

“‘Lieve land! Where is all my fat?’ he said. ‘It must be that vagabond Jakhals. But wait, I’ll get him!’

“He took a thick riem and his sjambok, and went to the waggon-house to catch Jakhals and give him a beating. But when he asked about the fat, Jakhals spoke in a little, little voice.

“‘Ach no, Baas! Would I then do such an ugly thing? And look at my tail. There’s no fat on it. The one whose tail is full of fat is the thief.’

“He turned round and waved his tail in the farmer’s face, and anyone could easily see that there was no fat on it.

“‘But the fat is gone,’ said the farmer, ‘someone must have stolen it,’ and he went on hunting, hunting in the waggon-house.

“At last he came to where Hyena was sleeping, just like a baby, baasjes, so nicely, and snoring a little: not the loud snoring like sawing planks—gorr-korrr, gorr-korrr—but nice soft snoring like people do when they sleep very fast—see-uw, see-uw. It is the deepest sleep when a person snores see-uw, see-uw. Hyena’s head was on some chaff, and her tail was sticking out behind her, stiff with fat!

“‘Aha! here is the thief,’ said the farmer, and he began to tie the riem round her.

“Old Brown Sister sat up and rubbed her eyes. ‘What’s the matter?’ she asked. ‘I had a beautiful dream. I dreamt I was eating fat the whole night, and——’

“‘And so you were—my fat,’ said the farmer, and he pulled the rope tighter. ‘And now I’m going to teach you not to steal again.’

“Poor old Brown Sister jumped about when she found out what he was going to do; she ran round and round the waggon-house trying to get away; she called out, and she called out that she did not know about the fat, that she had never tasted it, and had never even seen it. But it was no good.

“‘Look at your tail,’ said the farmer. ‘Will you tell me that your tail went by itself and rubbed itself in the fat?’

“So he tied her to the waggon wheel and beat her, and beat her—ach! she was quite sore—and she screamed and screamed, and at last he drove her away from the farm.

“Poor old Brown Sister! She didn’t even have the fat from her tail to eat, because, baasjes see, with the running round and the beating, it was all rubbed off. But she never went to live on a farm again; the veld was quite good enough for her.”

“Is that the end, Outa?” asked Willem.

“Yes, my baasje. It’s a bad end, but Outa can’t help it. It does maar end so.”

“And where was Jakhals all the time?” enquired Pietie, severely.

“Jakhals, my baasje, was sitting on the waggon saying his prayers—so, my baasjes.” Outa put his crooked hands together and cast his twinkling eyes upwards till only the yellows showed.

“Bezie, bezie, brame,

Hou jouw handjes same.’

In English: “Berry, berry, blackberry,

Hold your hands together.”

“And every time Hyena screamed, Jakhals begged her not to steal again, but to try and behave like a good Christian.”

“But Jakhals was the thief,” said little Jan, indignantly. “He was always the wicked one, and he was never punished. How was that, Outa?”

A whimsical smile played over the old man’s face, and though his eyes danced as wickedly as ever, his voice was sober as he answered.

“Ach! my little master, how can Outa tell? It is maar so in this old world. It’s like the funny thing Baas Willem saw in the Kaap (Cape Town), that runs down a place so quickly that it just runs up on the other side, and then it can’t stop, but it has to run down again, and so it keeps on—up and down, up and down.”

“You mean the switchback?” asked Willem.

“Ach, yes! baasje, Outa means so. And in the world it is the same—up and down, up and down. And often the good ones are down and the bad ones are up. But the thing—Outa can’t get the name right—goes on, and it goes on, and by-and-by the good ones are up and the bad ones are down.”

“But Jakhals seemed always to be up,” remarked Willem.

“Yes, my baasje,” said the old man, soberly. “Jakhals seemed always to be up. It goes so sometimes, it goes so,” but his eyes suddenly had a far-away look, and one could not be certain that he was thinking of Jakhals.

The Sun.

A Bushman Legend.

Outa, having disposed of his nightly tot, held his crooked hands towards the cheerful blaze and turned his engaging smile alternately on it and his little masters.

“Ach! what it is to keep a bit of the Sun even when the Sun is gone! Long ago Outa’s people, the Bushmen, did not know about fire. No, my baasjes, when the Big Fire, that makes the world warm and bright, walked across the sky, they were happy. They hunted, and danced, and feasted. They shot the fine big bucks with their little poisoned arrows, and they tore pieces off and ate the flesh with the red blood dripping from it: they had no fire to make it dry up. And the roots and eintjes that they dug out with their sharp stones—those, too, they ate just as they were. They did not cook, for they did not know how to make fire. But when the white man came, then they learnt. Baasjes see, Outa’s head is big—bigger than the Baas’s head—but that does not help. It’s the inside that matters, and the white man’s head inside here”—Outa tapped his wrinkled forehead—“Alla! but it can hold a lot!

“In the olden days, when Outa’s people were cold they crept into caves and covered themselves with skins, for they had no fire to sit by. Yes, they were sorry when the Old Man in the sky put down his arms and lay down to sleep.”

“What Old Man?” asked Pietie. “Do you mean the Sun?”

“Aja! Don’t baasjes then know that the Sun was once a man? It was long, long ago, before Outa’s people lived in the world: perhaps in the days of the Early Race that were before even the Flat Bushmen, who were the first people we really know anything about. In those days at a certain place lived a man, from whose armpits brightness streamed. When he lifted one arm, the place on that side of him was light; when he lifted the other arm, the place on that side of him was light; but when he lifted both arms, the light shone all around about him. But it only shone around the place where he lived; it did not reach to other places.

“Sometimes the people asked him to stand on a stone, so that his light could go farther; and sometimes he climbed on a kopje and lifted up his arms: ach! then the light streamed out far, far, and lighted up the veld for miles and miles. For the higher he went, the farther the light shone.

“Then the people said: ‘We see now, the higher he goes the farther his light shines. If only we could put him very high, his light would go out over the whole world.’

“So they tried to make a plan, and at last a wise old woman called the young people together and said: ‘You must go to this man from whose armpits the light streams. When he is asleep, you must go; and the strongest of you must take him under the armpits, and lift him up, and

swing him to and fro—so—so—and throw him as high as you can into the sky, so that he may be above the kopjes, lifting his arms to let the light stream down to warm the earth and make green things to grow in summer.’

“So the young men went to the place where the man lay sleeping. Quietly they went, my baasjes, creeping along in the red sand so as not to wake him. He was in a deep sleep, and before he could wake the strong young men took him under the armpits and swung him to and fro, as the wise old woman had told them. Then, as they swung him, they threw him into the air, high, high, and there he stuck.

“The next morning, when he awoke and stretched himself, lifting up his arms, the light streamed out from under them and brightened all the world, warming the earth, and making the green things grow. And so it went on day after day. When he put up his arms, it was bright, it was day. When he put down one arm, it was cloudy, the weather was not clear. And when he put down both arms and turned over to go to sleep, there was no light at all: it was dark; it was night. But when he awoke and lifted his arms, the day came again and the world was warm and bright.

“Sometimes he is far away from the earth. Then it is cold: it is winter. But when he comes near, the earth gets warm again; the green things grow and the fruit ripens: it is summer. And so it goes on to this day, my baasjes: the day and night, summer and winter, and all because the Old

Man with the bright armpits was thrown into the sky.”

“But the Sun is not a man, Outa,” said downright Willem, “and he hasn’t any arms.”

“No, my baasje, not now. He is not a man any more. But baasjes must remember how long he has been up in the sky—spans, and spans, and spans of years, always rolling round, and rolling round, from the time he wakes in the morning till he lies down to sleep at the other side of the world. And with the rolling, baasjes, he has got all rounder and rounder, and the light that at first came only from under his arms has been rolled right round him, till now he is a big ball of light, rolling from one side of the sky to the other.”

Cousin Minnie, who had been listening in a desultory way to the fireside chatter, as she wrote at the side-table, started and leant toward the little group; but a single glance was enough to show that so interested were the children in the personal aspect of the tale that there was no fear of confusion arising in their minds from Outa’s decided subversion of an elementary fact which she had been at some pains to get them to understand and accept.

“And his arms, Outa,” inquired little Jan, in his earnest way, “do they never come out now?”

Outa beamed upon him proudly. “Ach! that is my little master! Always to ask a big thing! Yes, baasje, sometimes they come out. When it is a dark day, then he has put his arms out. He is

holding them down, and spreading his hands before the light, so that it can't shine on the world. And sometimes, just before he gets up in the morning, and before he goes to sleep at night, haven't baasjes seen long bright stripes coming from the round ball of light?"

"Yes, yes," assented his little listeners, eagerly.

"Those are the long fingers of the Sun. His arms are rolled up inside the fiery ball, but he sticks his long fingers out and they make bright roads into the sky, spreading out all round him. The Old Man is peeping at the earth through his fingers. Baasjes must count them next time he sticks them out, and see if they are all there—eight long ones, those are the fingers; and two short ones for the thumbs."

Outa's knowledge of arithmetic was limited to the number of his crooked digits, and the smile with which he announced the extent of his mathematical attainments was a ludicrous cross between proud triumph and modest reluctance.

"When he lies down, he pulls them in. Then all the world grows dark and the people go to sleep."

"But, Outa, it isn't always dark at night," Pietie reminded him. "There are the Stars and the Moon, you know."

“Ach, yes! The little Stars and the Lady Moon. Outa will tell the baasjes about them another night, but now he must go quick—quick and let Lys rub his back with buchu. When friend Old Age comes the back bends and the bones get stiff, and the rheumatism—foei! but it can pinch! Therefore, my baasjes, Outa cooks bossies from the veld to rub on—buchu and kookamakranka and karroo bossies. They are all good, but buchu is the best. Yes, buchu for the outside, and the Baas’s fire-water for the inside!”

He looked longingly at the cupboard, but wood and glass are unresponsive until acted on by human agency; so, possessing no “Open, Sesame” for that unyielding lock, Outa contented himself by smacking his lips as he toddled away.

The Stars and the Stars' Road

Darkly-blue and illimitable, the arc of the sky hung over the great Karroo like a canopy of softest velvet, making a deep, mysterious background for the myriad stars, which twinkled brightly at a frosty world.

The three little boys, gathered at the window, pointed out to each other the constellations with which Cousin Minnie had made them familiar, and were deep in a discussion as to the nature and number of the stars composing the Milky Way when Outa shuffled in.

“Outa, do you think there are a billion stars up there in the Milky Way?” asked Willem.

“A billion, you know,” explained Pietie, “is a thousand million, and it would take months to count even one million.”

“Aja, baasje,” said the old man readily, seizing, with native adroitness, the unknown word and making it his own, “then there will surely be a billion stars up there. Perhaps,” he added, judicially considering the matter, “two billion, but no one knows, because no one can ever count them. They are too many. And to think that that bright road in the sky is made of wood ashes, after all.”

He settled himself on his stool, and his little audience came to attention.

“Yes, my baasjes,” he went on, “long, long ago, the sky was dark at night when the Old Man with the bright armpits lay down to sleep, but people learned in time to make fires to light up the darkness; and one night a girl, who sat warming herself by a wood fire, played with the ashes. She took the ashes in her hands and threw them up to see how pretty they were when they floated in the air. And as they floated away she put green bushes on the fire and stirred it with a stick. Bright sparks flew out and went high, high, mixing with the silver ashes, and they all hung in the air and made a bright road across the sky. And there it is to this day. Baasjes call it the Milky Way, but Outa calls it the Stars’ Road.

“Ai! but the girl was pleased! She clapped her hands and danced, shaking herself like Outa’s people do when they are happy, and singing:—

‘The little stars! The tiny stars!

They make a road for other stars.

Ash of wood-fire! Dust of the Sun!

They call the Dawn when Night is done!’

“Then she took some of the roots she had been eating and threw them into the sky, and there they hung and turned into large stars. The old roots turned into stars that gave a red light, and the young roots turned into stars that gave a golden light. There they all hung, winking and twinkling and singing. Yes, singing, my baasjes, and this is what they sang:—

‘We are children of the Sun!

It’s so! It’s so! It’s so!

Him we call when Night is done!

It’s so! It’s so! It’s so!

Bright we sail across the sky

By the Stars’ Road, high, so high;

And we, twinkling, smile at you,

As we sail across the blue!

It's so! It's so! It's so!

“Baasjes know, when the stars twinkle up there in the sky they are like little children nodding their heads and saying, ‘It’s so! It’s so! It’s so!’” At each repetition Outa nodded and winked, and the children, with antics of approval, followed suit.

“Baasjes have sometimes seen a star fall?” Three little heads nodded in concert.

“When a star falls,” said the old man impressively, “it tells us someone has died. For the star knows when a person’s heart fails and the person dies, and it falls from the sky to tell those at a distance that someone they know has died.

“One star grew and grew till he was much larger than the others. He was the Great Star, and, singing, he named the other stars. He called each one by name, till they all had their names, and in this way they knew that he was the Great Star. No other could have done so. Then when he had finished, they all sang together and praised the Great Star, who had named them.

“Now, when the day is done, they walk across the sky on each side of the Stars’ Road. It shows them the way. And when Night is over, they turn back and sail again by the Stars’ Road to call the Daybreak, that goes before the Sun. The Star that leads the way is a big bright star. He is called the Dawn’s-Heart Star, and in the dark, dark hour, before the Stars have called the Dawn, he shines—ach! baasjes, he is beautiful to behold! The wife and the child of the Dawn’s-Heart Star are pretty, too, but not so big and bright as he. They sail on in front, and then they wait—wait for the other Stars to turn back and sail along the Stars’ Road, calling, calling the Dawn, and for the Sun to come up from under the world, where he has been lying asleep.

“They call and sing, twinkling as they sing:—

‘We call across the sky,

Dawn! Come, Dawn!

You, that are like a young maid newly risen,

Rubbing the sleep from your eyes!

You, that come stretching bright hands to the sky,

Pointing the way for the Sun!

Before whose smile the Stars faint and grow pale,

And the Stars' Road melts away.

Dawn! Come Dawn!

We call across the sky,

And the Dawn's-Heart Star is waiting.

It's so! It's so! It's so!'

“So they sing, baasjes, because they know they are soon going out.

“Then slowly the Dawn comes, rubbing her eyes, smiling, stretching out bright fingers, chasing the darkness away. The Stars grow faint and the Stars' Road fades, while the Dawn makes a

bright pathway for the Sun. At last he comes with both arms lifted high, and the brightness, streaming from under them, makes day for the world, and wakes people to their work and play.

“But the little Stars wait till he sleeps again before they begin their singing. Summer is the time when they sing best, but even now, if baasjes look out of the window they will see the Stars, twinkling and singing.”

The children ran to the window and gazed out into the starlit heavens. The last sight Outa had, as he drained the soopje glass the Baas was just in time to hand him, was of three little heads bobbing up and down in time to the immemorial music of the Stars, while little Jan's excited treble rang out: “Yes, it's quite true, Outa. They do say, ‘It's so! It's so! It's so!’”

Why the Hare's Nose is Slit

The curtains had not yet been drawn nor the shutters closed, and little Jan looked with wide serious eyes at the full moon sailing serenely in the cold sky. Then he sighed as though thoughts too big for expression stirred within him, and turned absently towards the purring fire.

“And why does the big man make such a sighing?” asked Outa Karel. “It is like the wind in the mealie land at sun-under.”

Little Jan’s eyes slowly withdrew their gaze from some inward vision and became conscious of the old native. “Outa,” he said, “why is the moon so far away, and so beautiful, and so golden?”

“Ach! to hear him now! How can Outa tell? It is maar so. Just like grass is green and fire is hot, so the Moon is far away and beautiful and golden. But she is a cruel lady sometimes, too, and it is through her that the poor Little Hare runs about with a slit in his nose to-day.”

“Tell us, Outa.” Little Jan dropped on to the rug beside the basket of mealie-cobs, and the others edged nearer.

“And why do you call the Moon a lady?” asked Pietie of the inquiring mind.

“But doesn’t baasje know that the Moon is a lady? O yes, and for all her beauty she can be cross and cruel sometimes like other ladies, as you will hear.”

“Long, long ago, when the world was quite young, the Lady Moon wanted someone to take a message to Men. She tried first one creature and then another, but no! they were all too busy, they couldn’t go. At last she called the Crocodile. He is very slow and not much good, but the Lady Moon thought she would pinch his tail and make him go quickly. So she said to him: ‘Go down to Men at once and give them this message: “As I die and, dying, live, so also shall you die, and, dying, live.”’”

“Baasjes know how the Moon is sometimes big and round——so”——and Outa’s diminutive hands described a wide circle and remained suspended in the air——“like she is now in the sky. Then every night she gets smaller and smaller, so—so—so—so—so——till——clap!”——the crooked fingers come together with a bang——“there’s no more Moon: she is dead. Then one night a silver horn hangs in the sky——thin, very thin. It is the new Moon that grows, and grows, and gets beautiful and golden.” By the aid of the small claw-like hands the moon grew to the full before the children’s interested eyes. “And so it goes on, always living, and growing, and dying, and living again.

“So the Lady Moon pinched old Oom Crocodile’s tail, and he gave one jump and off he started

with the message. He went quickly while the Moon watched him, but soon he came to a bend in the road. Round he went with a great turn, for a Crocodile's back is stiff like a plank, he can't bend it; and then, when he thought he was out of sight, he went slower and slower—drif-draf-drippity-drif-draf, drif-draf-drippity-drif-draf, like a knee-haltered horse. He was toch too lazy.

“All of a sudden there was a noise—sh-h-h-h-h—and there was the Little Hare. ‘Ha! ha! Ha!’ he laughed, ‘what is the meaning of this drif-draf-drippity-drif-draf? Where are you going in such a hurry, Oom Crocodile?’

“‘I can't stop to speak to you, Neef Haasje,’ said Oom Crocodile, trying to look busy and to hurry up. ‘The Lady Moon has sent me with a message to Men.’

“‘And what is the message, Oom Crocodile?’

“‘It's a very important one: “As I die and, dying, live, so also shall you die and, dying, live.”’

“‘Ach, but that is a stupid message. And you can't ever run, Oom, you are so slow. You can only go drif-draf-drippity-drif-draf like a knee-haltered horse, but I go sh-h-h-h-h like the wind. Give the message to me and I will take it.’

“‘Very well,’ said the lazy Crocodile, ‘but you must say it over first and get it right.’

“So Neef Haasje said the message over and over, and then—sh-h-h-h-h—he was off like the wind. Here he was! there he was! and you could only see the white of his tail and his little behind legs getting small in the distance.

“At last he came to Men, and he called them together and said: ‘Listen, Sons of the Baboon, a wise man comes with a message. By the Lady Moon I am sent to tell you: “As I die and, dying, perish, so shall you also die and come wholly to an end.”’”

“Then Men looked at each other and shivered. All of a sudden the flesh on their arms was like goose-flesh. ‘What shall we do? What is this message that the Lady Moon has sent? “As I die and, dying, perish, so shall you also die and come wholly to an end.”’”

“They shivered again, and the goose-flesh crept right up their backs and into their hair, and their hair began to rise up on their heads just like—ach no, but Outa forgets, these baasjes don’t know how it is to feel so.” And the wide smile which accompanied these words hid the expression of sly teasing which sparkled in Outa’s dancing black eyes, for he knew what it was to be taken to task for impugning the courage of his young listeners.

“But Neef Haasje did not care. He danced away on his behind legs, and laughed and laughed to

think how he had cheated Men.

“Then he returned again to the Moon, and she asked: ‘What have you said to Men?’

“‘O, Lady Moon, I have given them your message: ‘Like as I die and, dying, perish, so also shall you die and come wholly to an end,’ and they are all stiff with fright. Ha! ha! Ha!’ Haasje laughed at the thought of it.

“‘What! cried the Lady Moon, ‘what! did you tell them that? Child of the devil’s donkey! you must be punished.’

“Ach, but the Lady Moon was very angry. She took a big stick, a kierie—much bigger than the one Outa used to kill lions with when he was young—and if she could have hit him, then”—Outa shook his head hopelessly—“there would have been no more Little Hare: his head would have been cracked right through. But he is a slim kerel. When he saw the big stick coming near, one, two, three, he ducked and slipped away, and it caught him only on the nose.

“Foei! but it was sore! Neef Haasje forgot that the Moon was a Lady. He yelled and screamed; he jumped high into the air; he jumped with all his four feet at once; and—scratch, scratch, scratch, he was kicking, and hitting and clawing the Moon’s face till the pieces flew.

“Then he felt better and ran away as hard as he could, holding his broken nose with both hands.

“And that is why to-day he goes about with a split nose, and the golden face of the Lady Moon has long dark scars.

“Yes, baasjes, fighting is a miserable thing. It does not end when the fight is over. Afterwards there is a sore place—ach, for so long!—and even when it is well, the ugly marks remain to show what has happened. The best, my little masters, is not to fight at all.”

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How the Jackal got his Stripe

“The Sun was a strange little child,” said Outa. “He never had any Pap-pa or Mam-ma. No one knew where he came from. He was just found by the roadside.

“In the olden days when the men of the Ancient Race—the old, old people that lived so long ago—were trekking in search of game, they heard a little voice calling, calling. It was not a springbokkie, it was not a tarentaal, it was not a little ostrich. They couldn’t think what it was. But it kept on, it kept on.” Outa’s head nodded in time to his repetitions.

“Why didn’t they go and look?” asked Willem.

“They did, my baasje. They hunted about amongst the milk-bushes by the roadside, and at last under one of them they found a nice brown baby. He was lying quite still looking about him, not like a baby, baasjes, but like an old child, and sparks of light, as bright as the sparks from Outa’s tinderbox, seemed to fly out of his eyes. When he saw the men, he began calling again.

““Carry me, carry me! Pick me up and carry me!”

““Arré! he can talk,” said the man. “What a fine little child! Where have your people gone? and

why did they leave you here?’

“But the little Sun wouldn’t answer them. All he said was, ‘Put me in your awa-skin. I’m tired; I can’t walk.’

“One of the men went to take him up, but when he got near he said, ‘Soe! but he’s hot; the heat comes out of him. I won’t take him.’

“‘How can you be so silly?’ said another man. ‘I’ll carry him.’

“But when he got near, he started back. ‘Alla! what eyes! Fire comes out of them.’ And he, too, turned away.

“Then a third man went. ‘He is very small,’ he said; ‘I can easily put him in my awa-skin.’ He stooped and took the little Sun under his arms.

“‘Ohé! ohé! ohé!’ he cried, dropping the baby on to the red sand. ‘What is this for toverij! It is like fire under his arms. He burns me when I take him up.’

“The others all came round to see. They didn’t come too near, my baasjes, because they were

frightened, but they wanted to see the strange brown baby that could talk, and that burned like a fire.

“All on a sudden he stretched himself; he turned his head and put up his little arms. Bright sparks flew from his eyes, and yellow light streamed from under his arms, and—hierr, skierr—the Men of the Early Race fell over each other as they ran through the milk-bushes back to the road. My! but they were frightened!

“The women were sitting there with their babies on their backs, waiting for their husbands.

“‘Come along! Hurry! hurry! See that you get away from here,’ said the men, without stopping.

“The women began to run, too.

“‘What was it? What did you find?’

“‘A terrible something,’ said the men, still running. ‘It pretends to be a baby, but we know it is a mensevreter. There it lies in the sand, begging one of us to pick it up and put it in his awa-skin, but as soon as we go near, it tries to burn us; and if we don’t make haste and get away from here, it will certainly catch us.’

“Then they ran faster than ever. Baasjes know—ach no!” corrected Outa, with a sly smile; “Outa means baasjes don’t know—how frightenness makes wings grow on people’s feet, so that they seem to fly. So the Men of the Early Race, and the women with their babies on their backs, flew, and very soon they were far from the place where the little Sun was lying.

“But someone had been watching, my baasjes, watching from a bush near by. It was Jakhals, with his bright eyes and his sharp nose, and his stomach close to the ground. When the people had gone, he crept out to see what had made them run. Hardly a leaf stirred, not a sound was heard, so softly he crept along under the milk-bushes to where the little Sun lay.

“‘Ach, what a fine little child has been left behind by the men!’ he said. ‘Now that is really a shame—that none of them would put it into his awa-skin.’

“‘Carry me, carry me! Put me in your awa-skin,’ said the little Sun.

“‘I haven’t got an awa-skin, baasje,’ said Jakhals, ‘but if you can hold on, I’ll carry you on my back.’

“So Jakhals lay flat on his stomach, and the little Sun caught hold of his maanhaar, and rolled

round on his back.

“‘Where do you want to go?’ asked Jakhals.

“‘There, where it far is,’ said the baby, sleepily.

“Jakhals trotted off with his nose to the ground and a sly look in his eye. He didn’t care where the baby wanted to go; he was just going to carry him off to the krantz where Tante and the young Jakhalses lived. If baasjes could have seen his face! Alle wereld! he was smiling, and when Oom Jakhals smiles, it is the wickedest sight in the world. He was very pleased to think what he was taking home; fat brown babies are as nice as fat sheep-tails, so he went along quite jolly.

“But only at first. Soon his back began to burn where the baby’s arms went round it. The heat got worse and worse, until he couldn’t hold it out any longer.

“‘Soe! Soe! Baasje burns me,’ he cried. ‘Sail down a little further, baasje, so that my neck can get cool.’

“The little Sun slipped further down and held fast again, and Jakhals trotted on.

“But soon he called out again, ‘Soe! Soe! Now the middle of my back burns. Sail down still a little further.’

“The little Sun went further down and held fast again. And so it went on. Every time Jakhals called out that he was burning, the baby slipped a little further, and a little further, till at last he had hold of Jakhals by the tail, and then he wouldn’t let go. Even when Jakhals called out, he held on, and Jakhals’s tail burnt and burnt. My! it was quite black!

“‘Help! help!’ he screamed! ‘Ach, you devil’s child! Get off! Let go! I’ll punish you for this! I’ll bite you! I’ll gobble you up! My tail is burning! Help! Help!’ And he jumped, and bucked, and rushed about the veld, till at last the baby had to let go.

“Then Jakhals jumped round, and ran at the little Sun to bite him and gobble him up. But when he got near, a funny thing happened, my baasjes. Yes truly, just when he was going to bite, he stopped halfway, and shivered back as if someone had beaten him. At first he had growled with crossness, but now he began to whine from frightenness.

“And why was it, my baasjes? Because from under the baby’s arms streamed brightness and hotness, and out of the baby’s eyes came streaks of fire, so that Jakhals winked and blinked, and tried to make himself small in the sand. Every time he opened his eyes a little, just like slits,

there was the baby sitting straight in front of him, staring at him so that he had to shut them again quick, quick.

“‘Come and punish me,’ said the baby.

“‘No, baasje, ach no!’ said Jakhals in a small, little voice, ‘why should I punish you?’

“‘Come and bite me,’ said the baby.

“‘No, baasje, no, I could never think of it.’ Jakhals made himself still a little smaller in the sand.

“‘Come and gobble me up,’ said the baby.

“‘Then Jakhals gave a yell and tried to crawl further back.

“‘Such a fine little child,’ he said, trying to make his voice sweet, ‘who would ever do such a wicked thing?’

“‘You would,’ said the little Sun. ‘When you had carried me safely to your krantz, you would have gobbled me up. You are toch so clever, Jakhals, but sometimes you will meet your match.

Now, look at me well.’

“Jakhals didn’t want to look, my baasjes, but it was just as if something made his eyes go open, and he lay there staring at the baby, and the baby stared at him—so, my baasjes, just so”—Outa stretched his eyes to their utmost and held each fascinated child in turn.

“‘You’ll know me again when you see me,’ said the baby, ‘but never, never again will you be able to look me in the face. And now you can go.’

“Fierce light shot from his eyes, and he blew at Jakhals with all his might; his breath was like a burning flame, and Jakhals, half dead with frightenness, gave a great howl and fled away over the vlakke.

“From that day, my baasjes, he has a black stripe right down his back to the tip of his tail. And he cannot bear the Sun, but hides away all day with shut eyes, and only at night when the Old Man with the bright armpits has gone to sleep, does he come out to hunt and look for food, and play tricks on the other animals.”

The Animals' Dam

“Ach! it was dry,” said Outa, “as dry as last year’s springbok biltong. For a long time the Old Man in the sky shot down strong light and sucked all the water out of the veld. From morning to night he poured down hotness on the world, and when he rolled round to sleep, a hot wind blew—and blew—and blew—till he woke to shine again. The karroo bushes dried up, the rivers had no water, and the poor animals began to die from thirst. It was such a drought, my little masters, as you have never seen.

“At last Oom Leeuw called the animals together to make a plan.

“The Sun had gone under, and the Lady Moon was sailing in the sky—beautiful, as she always is, and looking down on the hot world. Oom Leeuw sat under a krantz on the morning side of a kopje, where it was a little cool, and the others sat round him like a watermelon slice. Leopard, Hyena, Babiaan, Jakhals, Hare and Tortoise were in front; they were the chief ones. The smaller ones, like Dassie, Mierkat, and Hedgehog, were at the sides; and Zebra, Springbok, Ostrich and Giraffe waited in the veld to hear the news. They pretended to be eating, but all the time their ears went backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards—so, my baasjes,—to catch every little sound, and they were ready at the first sign of danger to race away, kicking up the dust so that Oom Leeuw would not be able to see them.

“But they needn’t have been afraid. Oom Leeuw was too hot and tired and weak to catch anything. He just sat against the krantz with his dry tongue hanging out, and the others just lay round about in the watermelon slice with their dry tongues hanging out, and every time they looked at the sky to see if any clouds were coming up. But no! The sky was just like a big, hot soap-pot turned over above their heads, with the Lady Moon making a silver road across it, and the little stars shining like bits broken off the big, hot Sun. There was nothing that even looked like a cloud.

“At last Oom Leeuw pulled in his tongue and rolled it about in his mouth to get the dryness off. When it stopped rattling, he began to talk.

“‘Friends and brothers and nephews,’ he said—yes, just like that Oom Leeuw began; he was so miserable that he felt friendly with them all. ‘Friends and brothers and nephews, it is time to make a plan. You know how it is with a drought; when it is at its worst, the bottom of the clouds falls out, and the water runs away fast, fast, to the sea, where there is too much water already, and the poor karroo is left again without any. Even if a land-rain comes, it just sinks in, because the ground is too loose and dry to hold it, so we must make a plan to keep the water, and my plan is to dig a dam. But it’s no use for one or two to work; everyone must help. What do you say?’

“‘Certainly,’ said Leopard.

“‘Certainly,’ said Hyena.

“‘Certainly,’ said Ant-bear.

“‘Certainly,’ said Jakhals, but he winked his eye at the Lady Moon, and then put his nose into the warm sand so that no one could see his sly smile.

“All the other animals said ‘Certainly,’ and then they began to talk about the dam. Dear land! A person would never have said their throats were dry. Each one had a different plan, and each one talked without listening to the other. It was like a Church bazaar—yes, baasjes, long ago when Outa was young he was on a bazaar in the village, but he was glad, my baasjes, when he could creep into the veld again and get the noise out of his ears.

“At last the Water Tortoise—he with the wise little head under his patchwork shell—said, ‘Let us go now while it is cool, and look for a place for the dam.’

“So they hunted about and found a nice place, and soon they began to make the dam. Baasjes, but those animals worked! They scratched, they dug, they poked, they bored, they pushed and they rolled; and they all did their best, so that the dam could be ready when the rain came. Only

lazy Jakhals did not work. He just roamed round saying to the others, ‘Why don’t you do this?’ ‘Why don’t you do that?’ till at last they asked, ‘Why don’t you do it yourself?’

“But Jakhals only laughed at them. ‘And why should I be so foolish as to scratch my nails off for your old dam?’ he said.

“‘But you said “Certainly,” too, when Oom asked us, didn’t you?’ they asked.

“Then Jakhals laughed more than ever. ‘Ha-ha-ha! Ha-ha-ha! Am I then a slave of my word?

That was last night. Don’t you know yet that a thing is one colour by moonlight, and quite another colour when the sun shines on it? Ha! ha! ha!’

“So he went about bothering the poor animals that were working so hard, and laughing at them when they got hot and tired.

“‘What’s the use of working so hard? Those who do not work will also drink.’

“‘How do you know?’ they asked.

“‘Wait a bit, you’ll see,’ said sly Jakhals, winking his eye again.

“At last the dam was finished, and that very night the rain began. It kept on and on, till the dam was quite full and the water began to run away over the veld, down to the great big dam called the Sea, that is the Mother of all water, and so broad, my baasjes, that truly you can’t see the wall at the other side, even when you stand on a high kopje. Yes, so Outa has heard from truth-telling people. The milk-bushes and karroo-bushes grew green again, and the little veld flowers burst out of the hard ground, and opened their white, and blue, and pink, and purple eyes to look at the Sun. They were like variegated karosses spread out on the veld, and the Old Man in the sky was not so fierce any more; he did not burn them with his hotness, but looked at them kindly.

“And the animals were toch so glad for the water! From far and near they came to the dam to drink.

“But Jakhals was before them all. Soon after the Sun went down—baasjes know, the wild animals sleep in the daytime and hunt in the night—he went to the dam and drank as much water as he wanted, and filled his clay pot with some to take home. Then he swam round and round to get cool, making the water muddy and dirty, and when the other animals came to drink, he slipped over the dam wall and was lost in the veld as if he had been a large pin.

“My! but Oom Leeuw was very angry!

“‘Hoorr-rr-rr,’ he roared, ‘hoorr-rr-rr! What is this for a thing? Does the lazy one think he can share with the workers? Who ever heard of such a thing? Hoorr-rr-rr! Here, Broer Babiaan, take this big kierie and hide yourself by the dam to-night, so that you can catch this Vagabond, this Water-stealer.’

“Early that night, there was Jakhals again. He peeped this way and that way—so, my baasjes,—and, yes truly, there was old Broer Babiaan lying amongst the bushes. But Jakhals was too schelm for him. He made as if he didn’t see him. He danced along on his hind legs, all in the round, all in the round, at the edge of the dam, singing:—

‘Hing-ting-ting! Honna-mak-a-ding!

My sweet, sweet water!’

“He sang this over and over, and every time he came to the end of a line, he dipped his fingers into his clay pot and sucked them.

“Aha! but my honey is nice,’ he said, licking his lips. ‘What do I want with their old dirty water, when I have a whole potful of nice sweet water!’

“Baasjes know, baboons will do anything for honey, and when old Broer Babiaan heard Jakhals he forgot he was there to guard the dam. He crept out from his hiding-place, a little nearer, and a little nearer, and at last he couldn’t keep quiet any longer. When Jakhals came dancing along again, he called out in a great hurry, ‘Good evening, Jakhals! Please give me a little of your sweet water, too!’

“Arré!’ said Jakhals, jumping to one side and pretending to be startled. ‘What a schrik you gave me! What are you doing here, Broer Babiaan?’

“Ach no! Jakhals, I’m just taking a little walk. It’s such a fine night.’

“But why have you got that big kierie?’

“Only to dig out eintjes.’

“Do you really want some of my sweet water?’

“‘Yes, please, Jakhals,’ said Broer Babiaan, licking his lips.

“‘And what will you give me for it?’

“‘I’ll let you fill your pot with water from the dam.’

“‘Ach! I don’t want any of that dirty old dam water, but I know how fond you are of this sweet water, Broer, so I’ll let you drink some. Here, I’ll hold your kierie while you drink.’

“Boer Babiaan was in such a hurry to get to the honey that he just threw the kierie to Jakhals, but just as he was going to put his fingers into the pot, Jakhals pulled it away.

“‘No, wait a bit, Broer,’ he said. ‘I’ll show you a better way. It will taste much nicer if you lie down.’

“‘Ach no! really, Jakhals?’

“‘Yes, really,’ said Jakhals. ‘And if you don’t lie down at once, you won’t get a drop of my sweet water.’

“He spoke quite crossly, and Babiaan was so tame by this time that he was ready to believe anything, so he lay down, and Jakhals stood over him with his knapsack riem.

““Now, Brother, first I’ll tie you with my riem, and then I’ll feed you with the honey.’

““Yes, yes,’ said Broer Babiaan quickly.

“His mouth was watering for the honey; he couldn’t think of anything else, and he had long ago forgotten all about looking after the dam. It goes so, my baasjes, when a person thinks only of what he wants and not of what he must. So he let Jakhals tie his hands and feet, and even his tail, and then he opened his mouth wide.

“But Jakhals only danced round and round, sticking his fingers into the pot and licking them, and singing:

‘Hing-ting-ting! Honna-mak-a-ding!

My sweet, sweet water!’

““Where’s mine?’ called Broer Babiaan. ‘You said you would feed me.

Where's my sweet water?'

“Here's all the sweet water you'll get from me,' said Jakhals, and—kraaks—he gave poor Broer Babiaan a hard hit with the kierie.

“Borgom! Borgom! Help!' screamed Broer Babiaan, and tried to roll away. But there was no one to help him, so he could only scream and roll over, and each time he rolled over, Jakhals hit him again—kraaks!

“At last he squeezed the clay pot—and baasjes can believe me it had never had any honey in it at all—over Broer Babiaan's head, while he ran off and drank as much water as he wanted, and swam, and stirred up the mud. Then he took the clay pot off Broer Babiaan's head, filled it with water, and danced off, singing:

'Hing-ting-ting! Honna-mak-a-ding!

My sweet, sweet water!'

“Good-bye, Brother,' he called out. 'I hope you'll enjoy the sweet water you'll get from Oom Leeuw when he sees how well you have looked after the dam.'

“Poor Old Broer Babiaan was, ach! so miserable, but he was even more unhappy after Oom Leeuw had punished him and set him on a large stone for the other animals to mock at. Baasjes, it was sad! They came in a long string, big ones and little ones, and each one stopped in front of the big stone and stuck out his tongue, then turned round and stuck out his tail—yes, so rude they were to Broer Babiaan, till the poor old animal got ashameder and ashameder, and sat all in a heap, hanging down his head and trying not to see how they were mocking at him.

“When all the animals had passed on and drunk water, Oom Leeuw untied Broer Babiaan and let him go, and off he went to the krantzes as fast as he could, with his tail between his legs.

“And that is all for to-night, my baasjes. It is too long to finish now. See, here comes Lys with the baasjes’ supper, and Outa can smell that his askoekies are burning by the hut.”

Evading the children’s detaining hands, Outa sidled away, turning in the passage doorway to paw the air with his crooked fingers in token of a final farewell.

Saved by his Tail

“The end, Outa, please,” said little Jan, “the end of The Animals’ Dam. You said it was too long to finish last night.”

“Aja, my baasje, it’s full of jakhals draaie, and that’s why it is so long, but it’s near the end now.

“The night was old by the time the animals had finished with old Broer Babiaan, and the stars were going out. Only the Big Star, that lasts the longest, was travelling quickly by the Stars’ Road to call the Dawn. It began to get light already at the place where the shining Old Man gets up every day, and that meant it was time for the animals to fade away to their sleeping-places.

“Oom Leeuw looked round on them. ‘Who will look after the dam to-night?’ he asked.

“‘I will,’ said a little voice, quickly. ‘Peep! peep!’

“‘And who is this that speaks from the ground?’ asked Oom. ‘Let us find this brave one.’

“They looked about in the sand, and there, under a milk-bush near the dam, sat the Water Tortoise. He was nice and big, baasjes, as big as the lid of the soap-pot, and his skinny legs were very strong. He stretched out his skinny neck and twinkled his little black eyes.

“‘I’ll look after the dam, Oom, and I’ll catch the Water-Spoiler for you.’

“‘Ha! ha! ha! How will you do that?’ asked Oom Leeuw.

“‘If Oom will just let someone rub my back with the sticky black stuff from the floor of the hives, then Oom will see what will happen.’

“‘This is a wise little man,’ said Oom Leeuw, and he ordered Old Brown Sister Hyena—she with the limp in the left hind leg—to rub the Water Tortoise with the sticky stuff.

“‘That night, my baasjes, when Jakhals went to the dam to drink, he peeped about, but no! there was no one to guard the dam; only a large black stone lay near the edge of the water.

“‘Arré! this is lucky,’ said Jakhals. ‘Such a nice large stone! I’ll stand on it while I drink.’

“‘He didn’t know that the stone had a strong skinny neck, and, on the end of the neck, a head with little bright eyes that could see everything that was going on. So he gave a jump, and—woops!—down he came on to the stone with his two front feet, and there they stuck fast to the sticky black stuff, and he could not move them. He tried, and he tried, but it was no use.

“‘Toever!’ he screamed, ‘toever! Let me go!’

“‘Peep! peep!’ said a little voice, ‘don’t be frightened.’

“‘Who says I’m frightened, you old toever stone?’ asked Jakhals. ‘Though my front feet are fast, I can still kick with my hind feet.’

“‘Kick, kick, kick, and stick fast,’ said the little voice.

“So Jakhals kicked and kicked, and his hind feet stuck fast.

“There was a funny sound under the water, like water bubbling through a reed. It was the Water Tortoise laughing.

“‘Nier-r-r! nier-r-r!’ said Jakhals, getting very cross; ‘I’ve still got a tail, and I’ll beat you with it.’

“‘Beat, beat, beat, and stick fast,’ said the little voice.

“So Jakhals beat and beat, and his tail stuck fast.

“‘Nier-r-r!’ he said again, very angry; ‘I’ve still got a mouth, and I’ll bite you with it.’

“‘Bite, bite, bite, and stick fast,’ said the little voice.

“Jakhals opened his mouth, and bit and bit, and his mouth stuck fast. There he was, all in a bundle, sticking altogether fast to the black stone, and the more he tried to get free, the more he stuck fast.

“‘Peep, peep!’ said the Water Tortoise, poking up his head and laughing. Then he marched to the top of the dam-wall where everyone could see the strange sight, and there he sat, all quiet and good, till the other animals came.

“‘Arré! they were glad when they saw Jakhals sticking to the Water Tortoise. They held a Council and ordered him to be killed, and Broer Hyena—old Brown Sister’s husband—was to be the killer.

“They loosened Jakhal’s mouth from the sticky stuff, so that he could talk for the last time. He was very sorry for himself. His voice was thick with sorriness, and he could hardly get the words out.

“‘Thank you, Oom,’ he said. ‘I know I’m a wicked creature. It’s better for me to die than to live and trouble everyone so much.’

“Oom Leeuw and the other animals were wondering what kind of death the Water-stealer should die.

“‘Chop my head off,’ said Jakhals; ‘throw me in the fountain, but please, ach! please don’t shave my tail and hit me on the big stone.’

“Oom Leeuw and the others were still putting their heads together.

“‘Beat me with kieries, drown me in the dam,’ said Jakhals, ‘but don’t, ach! please don’t smear my tail with fat and hit me on the big stone.’

“Oom Leeuw and the others made as if they were taking no notice of him.

“‘Chop me in little pieces, beat me with thorn branches,’ said Jakhals, ‘but please, ach! please don’t take me by the tail and hit me on the big stone.’

“At last Oom Leeuw turned round.

“‘Just as you say, it shall be done. Shave his tail,’ he said to the others, ‘smear it with fat, and hit his head on the big stone. Let it be done.’

“So it was done, and Jakhals stood very still and sad while his tail was being shaved and smeared. But when Hyena swung him round—one, two, three, pht!—away he slipped and ran over the veld as fast as he could. All the others ran after him, but they were only running to catch and he was running to live, so he went like the wind, and soon they were left far behind.

“He never stopped till he came to a mountain where a krantz hung over and made a kind of cave, and in he crept. The first to come after him was Oom Leeuw, who had run faster than the others. Jakhals watched Oom crawling in, and when Oom’s head touched the top of the cave, he ran out, calling:

“‘Oom, Oom, the krantz is falling. If you don’t hold it up, you’ll be crushed to death. I’ll run and get a pole to prop it up, but Oom must please wait till I come back.’

“He left Oom plastering his head against the krantz to hold it up, while—pht!—he shot away, and never stopped till he got safe home, where he rolled bolmakissie over and over, laughing to think how he had cheated all the animals again.”

The Flying Lion

“Once upon a time,” remarked Outa, thoughtfully, “Oom Leeuw used to fly.”

“O-o-o-oh!” said the children all together, and their eyes widened with terror at the picture called up by Outa’s words.

“Yes, my baasjes, and then nothing could live before him. His wings were not covered with feathers: they were like the wings of Brother Bat, all skin and ribs; but they were very big, and very thick, and very strong, and when he wasn’t flying they were folded flat against his sides. When he was angry he let the points down to the ground—tr-r-r-r—like Oubaas Turkey when he gobble-gobble-gobbles and struts before his wives—tr-r-r-r, and when he wanted to rise from the ground he spread them out and flapped them up and down slowly at first—so, my baasjes; then faster and faster—so, so, so—till he made a big wind with them and sailed away into the air.”

Outa, flapping his crooked arms and puffing out his disproportionate chest, seemed about to follow suit, but suddenly subsided again on to his stool.

“Ach, but it was a terrible sight! Then, when he was high above the earth, he would look down for something to kill. If he saw a herd of springbokke he would fly along till he was just over

them, and pick out a nice fat one; then he would stretch out his iron claws, fold his wings and—woops!—down he would fall on the poor bokkie before it had time to jump away. Yes, that was the way Oom Leeuw hunted in the olden times.

“There was only one thing he was afraid of, and that was that the bones of the animals he caught and ate would be broken to pieces. No one knew why, and everyone was too frightened of Oom Leeuw to try and find out. He used to keep them all at his home in the krantzes, and he had crows to look after them, two at a time—not like the ugly black crows that build in the willow-trees near the dam, but White Crows, the kind that come only once in many years. As soon as a white crow baby was found it was taken to Oom Leeuw—that was his order; then he kept it in the krantzes of the mountains and let it grow big; and when the old White Crows died the next eldest became watchmen, and so there were always White Crows to watch the bones when Oom Leeuw went hunting.

“But one day while he was away Brother Big Bullfrog came along, hop-hop-hoppity-hop, hop-hop-hoppity-hop, and said: ‘Why do you sit here all day, you Whitehead Crows?’

“And the White Crows said: ‘We sit here to look after the bones for Oom Leeuw.’

“‘Ach, but you must be tired of sitting!’ said Brother Big Bullfrog, ‘You fly away a little and stretch your wings. I will sit here and look after the bones.’

“The White Crows looked this way and that way, up and down and all round, but no! they couldn’t see Oom Leeuw, and they thought: ‘Now is our chance to get away for a fly.’

“So they said ‘Cr-r-raw, cr-r-raw!’ and stretched out their wings and flew away.

“Brother Big Bullfrog called out after them: ‘Don’t hurry back. Stay as long as you like. I will take care of the bones.’

“But as soon as they were gone he said: ‘Now I shall find out why Oom Leeuw keeps the bones from being broken. Now I shall see why men and animals can live no longer.’ And he went from one end to the other of Oom Leeuw’s house at the bottom of the krantz, breaking all the bones he could find.

“Ach, but he worked quickly! Crack! crack, crack, crack! Wherever he went he broke bones. Then when he had finished he hopped away, hop-hop-hoppity-hop, hop-hop-hoppity-hop, as fast as he could. When he had nearly reached his dam in the veld, the White Crows overtook him. They had been to the krantz and, foei! they were frightened when they saw all the broken bones.

“‘Craw, crawl!’ they said, ‘Brother Big Bullfrog, why are you so wicked? Oom Leeuw will be so angry. He will bite off our nice white heads—craw, crawl!—and without a head, who can live?’

“But Brother Big Bullfrog pretended he didn’t hear. He just hopped on as fast as he could, and the White Crows went after him.

“‘It’s no good hopping away, Brother Bullfrog,’ they said. ‘Oom Leeuw will find you wherever you are, and with one blow of his iron claws he will kill you.’

“But old Brother Big Bullfrog didn’t take any notice. He just hopped on, and when he came to his dam he sat back at the edge of the water and blinked the beautiful eyes in his ugly old head, and said: ‘When Oom Leeuw comes tell him I am the man who broke the bones. Tell him I live in this dam, and if he wants to see me he must come here.’

“The White Crows were very cross. They flew down quickly to peck Brother Big Bullfrog, but they only dug their beaks into the soft mud, because Brother Big Bullfrog wasn’t sitting there any longer. Kabloops! he had dived into the dam, and the White Crows could only see the rings round the place where he had made a hole in the water.

“Oom Leeuw was far away in the veld, waiting for food, waiting for food. At last he saw a herd

of zebras—the little striped horses that he is very fond of—and he tried to fly up so that he could fall on one of them, but he couldn't. He tried again, but no, he couldn't. He spread out his wings and flapped them, but they were quite weak, like baasjes' umbrella when the ribs are broken.

“Then Oom Leeuw knew there must be something wrong at his house, and he was toch too angry. He struck his iron claws into the ground and roared and roared. Softly he began, like thunder far away rolling through the kloofs, then louder and louder, till—hoor-rr-rr-rr, hoor-rr-rr-rr—the earth beneath him seemed to shake. It was a terrible noise.

“But all his roaring did not help him, he couldn't fly, and at last he had to get up and walk home. He found the poor White Crows nearly dead with fright, but they soon found out that he could no longer fly, so they were not afraid of him.

“‘Hoor-rr-rr-rr, hoor-rr-rr-rr!’ he roared. ‘What have you done to make my wings so weak?’

“And they said: ‘While Oom was away someone came and broke all the bones.’

“And Oom Leeuw said: ‘You were put here to watch them. It is your fault that they are broken, and to punish you I am going to bite your stupid white heads off. Hoor-rr-rr-rr!’

“He sprang towards them, but now that they knew he couldn’t fly they were not afraid of him. They flew away and sailed round in the air over his head, just too high for him to reach, and they called out: ‘Ha! ha! ha! Oom cannot catch us! The bones are broken, and his wings are useless. Now men and animals can live again. We will fly away and tell them the good news.’”

“Oom Leeuw sprang into the air, first to one side and then to the other, striking at them, but he couldn’t reach them, and when he found all his efforts were in vain, he rolled on the ground and roared louder than ever.

“The White Crows flew round him in rings, and called out: ‘Ha! ha! ha! he can no longer fly! He only rolls and roars! The man who broke the bones said: “If Oom Leeuw wants me he can come and look for me at the dam.”’ Craw, crawl,’ and away they flew.

“Then Oom Leeuw thought: ‘Wait, I’ll get hold of the one who broke the bones. I’ll get him.’ So he went to the dam, and there was old Brother Bullfrog sitting in the sun at the water’s edge. Oom Leeuw crept up slowly, quietly, like a skelm, behind Brother Bullfrog.

“‘Ha! now I’ve got him,’ he thought, and made a spring, but Brother Bullfrog said, ‘Ho!’ and dived in—kabloops!—and came up at the other side of the dam, and sat there blinking in the sun.

“Oom Leeuw ran round as hard as he could, and was just going to spring, when—kabloops!—Brother Bullfrog dived in again and came up at the other side of the dam.

“And so it went on. Each time, just when Oom Leeuw had nearly caught him, Brother Bullfrog dived in—kabloops!—and called out ‘Ho!’ from the other side of the dam.

“Then at last Oom Leeuw saw it was no use trying to catch Brother Bullfrog, so he went home to see if he could mend the broken bones. But he could not, and from that day he could no longer fly, only walk upon his iron claws. Also, from that day he learned to creep quietly like a skelm after his game, and though he still catches them and eats them, he is not as dangerous as he was when he could fly.

“And the White Crows can no longer speak. They can only say, ‘Craw, crawl.’

“But old Brother Big Bullfrog still goes hop-hop-hoppity-hop round about the dam, and whenever he sees Oom Leeuw he just says ‘Ho!’ and dives into the water—kabloops!—as fast as he can, and sits there laughing when he hears Oom Leeuw roar with anger.”

Why the Heron has a Crooked Neck

The flames leapt gaily upward in the wide fireplace, throwing strange shadows on the painted walls and gleaming on the polished wood of floor and beam and cupboard. Little Jan basked contentedly in the warmth, almost dozing—now absently stroking the terrier curled up beside him, now running his fingers through the softer fur of the rug on which he lay. It was made of silver-jackal skins—a dozen of them, to judge from the six bushy tails spread out on either side; and as Outa Karel's gaze rested on them, he remarked reminiscently—

“Arré! but Oom Jakhals was a slim kerel! No one ever got the better of him without paying for it.”

In an instant little Jan was sitting bolt upright, every symptom of sleep banished from his face; the book from which Willem had been laboriously trying to gain some idea of the physical features of Russia was flung to the far end of the rustbank; while Pietie, suspending for a brief moment his whittling of a catapult stick, slid along the floor to get within better sight and sound of the story-teller.

“Yes, my little masters, sometimes it was Oom Leeuw he cheated, sometimes it was Oubaas Babiaan or Oom Wolf, and once it was the poor little Dove, and that is what made me think of how he was cheated himself.”

“Did the little Dove cheat him?” asked Pietie eagerly.

“No, baasje, the Dove is too frightened—not stupid, baasje, but like people are when they are too gentle and kind and believe everything other people tell them. She was sitting on her nest one day singing to her little children, ‘Coo-oo, coo-oo coo-oo,’ when Oom Jakhals prowled along under the tree and heard her.

“‘Alla wereld! Now I’ll have a nice breakfast,’ he thought, and he called out, ‘Good morning, Tante. I hear you have such pretty little children. Please bring them down for me to see.’

“But the Tante was frightened of Jakhals, and said, ‘I’m sorry, Oom, they are not well to-day, and I must keep them at home.’

“Then Jakhals lost his temper, and called out, ‘Nonsense, I’m hungry and want something to eat, so throw down one of your little children at once.’

“Baasjes know, sometimes crossness drives away frightenness; and Tante was so cross with Oom Jakhals for wanting to eat one of her little children that she called out, ‘No, no, you bad Jakhals, I shall do nothing of the sort. Go away and look for other food.’

“‘If you don’t, I’ll fly up and eat them all,’ said Jakhals. ‘Throw one down at once.’ And he stamped about and made such a horrible noise that the poor Tante thought he was really flying up. She looked at her babies: there wasn’t one she wanted to give, but it was better to lose one than have them all eaten; so she shut her eyes and fluttered about the nest till one of them fell out, and Jakhals caught it in his mouth and carried it off to his hole to eat.

“Ach! but the poor Tante was sad! She spread her wings over her other children and never slept all night, but looked about this way and that way with her soft eyes, thinking every little noise she heard was Oom Jakhals trying to fly up to her nest to gobble up all her babies.

“The next morning there was Oom Jakhals again. ‘Tante, your child was a nice, juicy mouthful. Throw me down another. And make haste, do you hear? or I’ll fly up and eat you all.’

“‘Coo-oo, coo-oo, coo-oo,’ said Tante, crying, ‘no, I won’t give you one.’ But it was no use, and in the end she did what she had done before—just shut her eyes and fluttered round and round till a baby fell out of the nest. She thought there was no help for it, and, like some people are, she thought what the eye didn’t see the heart wouldn’t feel; but her heart was very sore, and she cried more sadly than ever, and this time she said, ‘Oo-oo, oo-oo, oo-oo!’ It was very sad and sorrowful to listen to ‘Oo-oo, oo-oo, oo-oo!’

“Here came old Oom Reijer. He is a kind old bird, though he holds his neck so crooked and looks like there was nothing to smile at in the whole wide world.

““Ach! why do you cry so sadly, Tante? It nearly gives me a stitch in my side.’

““Oo-oo! I’m very miserable. Oom Jakhals has eaten two of my little children, and to-morrow he will come for another, and soon I shall have none left.’

““But why did you let him eat them?’

““Because he said if I didn’t give him one he would fly up and eat them all. Oo-oo-oo!’

“Then Oom Reijer was very angry. He flapped his wings, and stretched out his long neck—so, my baasjes, just so” (the children hugged themselves in silent delight at Outa’s fine acting) —“and he opened and shut his long beak to show how he would like to peck out Oom Jakhals’s wicked eyes if he could only catch him.

““That vervlakste Jakhals!’ he said. ‘To tell such lies! But, Tante, you are stupid. Don’t you know Oom Jakhals can’t fly? Now listen to me. When he comes again, tell him you know he can’t fly, and that you won’t give him any more of your children.’

“The next day there came Oom Jakhals again with his old story, but Tante just laughed at him.

“‘Ach, no! you story-telling Bushytail!’ she said, ‘I won’t give you any more of my little children, and you needn’t say you’ll fly up and eat them, because I know you can’t.’

“‘Nier-r-r, nier-r-r!’ said Oom Jakhals, growling, ‘how do you know that?’

“‘Oom Reijer told me, so there!’ said Tante. ‘And you can just go to your mother!’

“My! but Tante was getting brave now that she knew she and her little children were safe. That was the worst insult you can ever give a grown-up jakhals, and Oom Jakhals growled more than ever.

“‘Never mind,’ he said at last, ‘Tante is only a vrouwmens; I won’t bother with her any more. But wait till I catch Oom Reijer. He’ll be sorry he poked his long nose into my business, the old meddler,’ and he trotted off to look for him.

“He hunted and hunted, and at last he found him standing on one leg at the side of the river, with his long neck drawn in and his head resting on his shoulders.

“‘Good day, Oom Reijer,’ he said politely. ‘How is Oom to-day?’

“‘I’m all right,’ answered Oom Reijer shortly, without moving an inch.

“‘Jakhals spoke in a little small voice—ach! toch so humble. ‘Oom, please come this way a little: I’m so stupid, but you are so wise and clever, and I want to ask your advice about something.’

“‘Oom Reijer began to listen. It is maar so when people hear about themselves. He put down his other leg, stretched out his neck, and asked over his shoulder, ‘What did you say, eh?’

“‘Come toch this way a little; the mud over there is too soft for me to stand on. I want your valuable advice about the wind. The other people all say I must ask you, because no one is as wise as you.’

“‘Truly Jakhals was a slim kerel! He knew how to stroke Oom Reijer’s feathers the right way.

“‘Oom Reijer came slowly over the mud—a person mustn’t show he is too pleased: he even stopped to swallow a little frog on the way, and then he said, carelesslike, ‘Yes, I can tell you all

about the wind and weather. Ask what you like, Jakhals.’ His long neck twisted about with pride.

“Oom, when the wind is from the west, how must one hold one’s head?”

“‘Is that all?’ said Oom Reijer. ‘Just so.’ And he turned his head to the east.

“‘Thank you, Oom. And when the wind is from the east?’

“‘So.’ Oom Reijer bent his neck the other way.

“‘Thank you, Oom,’ said the little small voice, so grateful and humble. ‘But when there is a storm and the rain beats down, how then?’

“‘So!’ said Oom Reijer, and he bent his neck down till his head nearly touched his toes.

“My little masters, just as quickly as a whip-snake shoots into his hole, so Jakhals shot out his arm and caught Oom Reijer on the bend of his neck—crack!—and in a minute the poor old bird was rolling in the mud with his neck nearly broken, and so weak that he couldn’t even lift his beak to peck at the false wicked eyes that were staring at him.

“O! how glad was cruel Jakhals! He laughed till he couldn’t any more. He screamed and danced with pleasure. He waved his bushy tail, and the silver mane on his back bristled as he jumped about.

“Ha! ha! ha! Oom thought to do me a bad turn, but I’ll teach people not to interfere with me. Ha! ha! ha! No one is as wise as Oom Reijer, eh? Then he will soon find out how to mend his broken neck. Ha! ha! ha!”

“Jakhals gave one last spring right over poor Oom Reijer, and danced off to his den in the kopjes to tell Tante Jakhals and the little Jakhalsjes how he had cheated Oom Reijer.

“And from that day, baasjes, Oom Reijer’s neck is crooked: he can’t hold it straight; and it’s all through trying to interfere with Jakhals. That is why I said Jakhals is a slim kerel. Whether he walks on four legs or on two, the best is maar to leave him alone because he can always make a plan, and no one ever gets the better of him without paying for it in the end.”

The Little Red Tortoise

“No Jakhals story to-night, please, Outa,” said little Jan, as they gathered round the fire. “We all think Jakhals was a cruel horrid creature, eating the poor little Doves and cracking the good Heron’s neck.”

“Yes,” chimed in Pietie, “he was always playing wicked tricks, so no more Jakhals for us. What will you tell us to-night, Outa?”

“Something really nice,” suggested Willem, “and not unkind.”

Outa’s beady black eyes twinkled from one to another of his little masters, while an affectionate smile spread over his yellow face, accentuating the wrinkles which criss-crossed it in every direction.

“Ach! the soft young hearts! Outa’s heart was like that once, too, but”—he shook his head—“if the heart doesn’t get a little taai like a biltong, it is of no use to a person in this old hard world.” He deposited his shapeless hat on the floor, tapped his red kopdoek with a clawlike forefinger, and waited for an inspiration. It came from an unexpected quarter, for suddenly there was a commotion at the end of his old coat, the tails of which hung down nearly to the floor, and, diving into his pocket, the old man triumphantly produced a squirming tortoise.

“See what Outa caught for the baasjes near the Klip Kop this afternoon—a nice little berg schilpad (Mountain tortoise). Now Baas Willem can put it in his kraal with the others and let it lay eggs. It is still young, but it will grow—yes, so big.” A cart-wheel might have been comfortably contained in the circle described by Outa’s arms.

It was a knobbly, darkly-marked tortoise, quite unlike those the little boys generally found in the veld near the house, and they took possession of it with delight and suggestions as to a name. After discussion, honours were equally in favour of “Piet Retief” and “Mrs. Van Riebeeck,” and it was decided that the casting vote should be left to Cousin Minnie, the children’s governess.

For a long time they had kept tortoises of all sorts and sizes in their schilpad-kraal, and so tame and intelligent had some of these creatures grown that they would come when called, and big old “Woltemade” roamed about at will, often disappearing for a time, and returning to his companions after a few days in the veld.

Outa turned the new acquisition on its back on the jackalskin rug, where it lay wriggling and going through the strangest contortions. “Ach! the wise little man. Is it there its mother sprinkled it with buchu (aromatic herb), there, just under its arm?” He touched the skinny under-side of one of its forelegs. “Here, Baas Willem, put it in the soap-boxie till to-morrow. Ach! if only it had been a red tortoise, how glad Outa would have been!”

“A red tortoise!” echoed Pietie and little Jan, while Willem hurried back from the passage to hear all about it.

“And have the baasjes then never heard of a red tortoise? Yes, certainly, sometimes a red one is born, but not often—only once in a thousand years; and when this happens the news is sent round, because it is such a wonderful thing; and the whole nation of Schilpads—those frogs with bony shields and hard beaks—are glad because they know the little red one has come to help them against their enemies.

“Once a long, long time ago a mother Schilpad laid an egg in a shallow hole in the sand, just where the sun could warm it all the day, and she scraped a little sand over it, so that no one could see it. See baasjes, she was afraid of thieves. It was white and round, and so large that she felt very proud of it, and she often went to see how it was getting on. One day, as she got near the place she heard a little voice: ‘Peep! Peep! Mam-ma, mam-ma, come and find me.’

“So she called out, ‘Kindje, kindje, here’s your mam-ma.’ My! but she walked fast! Her short legs just went so”—Outa’s arms worked vigorously—“and when she got to the karroo-bush where she had put the egg the shell was broken and a little Red Tortoise was sitting alongside of it!

“His shell was soft, and you could see everything inside of him, and how the blood went this way and that way: but never mind, it is maar so with little tortoises. He was fine and healthy, and everything about him was quite red. Alle wereld! old Mam-ma was proud! She went and told all her friends, and they came from all sides to see the little Red Tortoise. There were berg tortoises, and vlakke tortoises, and zand-kruipers, and even water tortoises, young and old, and they all sat round and praised him and gave him good advice and nice things to eat.

“He listened to everything and ate all the nice things, and grew bigger and redder and harder, but he didn’t talk much, and the Old Ones nodded to each other and said, ‘Ach, but he is sensible!’ But the Young Ones said, ‘Ach, but he is stuck-up!’ and they went away and crawled in the red clay to make themselves red. But it was no good. In a little while it all rubbed off.

“At last all the visitor Schilpads went home again. But the little Red Tortoise stayed with his Mam-ma, and went on growing bigger and redder and harder, and his Mam-ma was toch so proud of him!

“When he walked in the veld and the other young tortoises said to him, ‘Come, we’ll show you the way to do things; you must do so, and you must do so,’ he said, ‘You can do so if you like, but I’ll do things my own way!’ And they said ‘Stuck-up Red Thing! Wait, Oubaas Giraffe will get you!’ But they left him alone, and although they all wished they were red, they did not crawl in the clay any more: they knew it was no good. It was only from outside, so it soon

rubbed off, but the little Red One's redness was from inside; and baasjes know, for a thing to be any good it must be on the inside." He glanced involuntarily at the wall-cupboard where his soopje was safely locked up: it would certainly not be any good, in his opinion, till it was on the inside of him.

"But when the Old Tortoises gave him advice, the little Red Tortoise listened and thanked them. He was a wise little man. He knew when to speak and when to hold his tongue.

"At that time, my baasjes, the whole Tortoise nation was having a hard time with Oubaas Giraffe—that old horse with the long neck and the unequal legs, who is all white and black like a burnt thornbush with crows sitting on it. He gives blue ashes when he is burnt, therefore is he called the Blue One.

"He had taken to eating tortoises. They didn't know what to do. They tried to make a plan, but no! they could find no remedy. Whenever Oubaas Giraffe saw a nice young tortoise that he could easily swallow, he picked it up in his mouth, and from fright it pulled its head and all its feet into its shell, and—goops!—one swallow and it had sailed down the Blue One's long throat, just like baasjes sail down the plank at the side of the skeer-kraal.

"The little Red Tortoise listened to the plans that were made, and at last he thought of a plan. He was not sure how it would go, but he was a brave little one, and he thought by himself, 'If it

goes wrong, there will be no more little Red Tortoise: but if it goes right, then the whole Tortoise nation will be able to live again.’

“So what did he do, my baasjes? He crawled out far in the veld and sat in the path where the Old Blue One liked to walk. Soon he heard goof, goof, goof, coming nearer and nearer. Then the noise stopped. The little Red One peeped from under his shell. Yes, there was the great Blue One, standing over him and looking very fierce.

“Do you know, little Red Tortoise, in one moment I could trample you to death?”

“The little Red One was very frightened, for this was not his plan, but he said nothing.

“Do you know, little Red Tortoise, in one moment I could swallow you?”

“Ach! how glad was the little Red Tortoise! But he only said in a small little voice, ‘Yes, noble Blue One, I belong to the nation whom it is the custom to swallow. Please swallow me!’

“Oubaas Giraffe picked him up and gave a little gulp, and the little Red Tortoise slipped half-way down his long throat. But ojé! here a strange thing happened. The little Red One would go no further. Instead of drawing in his head and legs and slipping down like a stone, like all the other tortoises had done, he wanted to see where he was going, so he stuck out his head, and

fastened his sharp little nails into Oubaas Giraffe's gullet, and there he hung like a bat on a wall.

“Go down, go down, little Tortoise! You choke me!’ The Old Blue One could hardly speak; his throat was so full of tortoise.

“Peep! peep!’ said the little Red One, and held on more tightly than ever.

“Come up, come up, little Tortoise! You kill me!’ The Old Blue One was stamping and gurgling now.

“Peep! peep!’ said the little Red One, and hung on with his hard bent beak as well. He thought, ‘No! too many of my nation have sailed down this red slot. I won’t let go.’

“I tell you, baasjes, Oubaas Giraffe danced and pranced over the veld; he screamed and bellowed; he gurgled and swallowed; he tried to get the little Red Tortoise down, and he tried to get him up; but it was no use. The little Red One clung fast to him till he was quite choked, and sank down in the sand and died.

“Then the little Red Tortoise crawled out, and went home to tell his Mam-ma that he had killed

Oubaas Giraffe and that his nation could have peace again. Ach! but she was proud of him!
“‘It’s not for nothing you were born red,’ she said. ‘Come here, my little Crab, that I may put buchu under your arm. Come, my crooked-legged little one, let your mother sprinkle you with buchu!’

“When she had sprinkled him with buchu, they went and told their friends, and all the Tortoise nation rejoiced and went and had a great feast off Oubaas Giraffe as he lay dead in the veld.

“And they thought more of the little Red Tortoise than ever. Even the Young Ones, who had been angry with him, said, ‘He is wiser than we are. We will listen to what he says. P’r’aps, after all, there is something in being born a certain colour.’”

The Ostrich Hunt

The next day all the time that was not given to lessons and meals was spent by the little boys in scouring the veld for a red tortoise. Disappointment at their fruitless search found vent in no measured terms when Outa Karel appeared in the dining-room at his usual hour.

“Ach, to hear them now!” he said, regarding them with his wide-mouthed smile of amused tolerance. “Does it then rain red tortoises? And how can the baasjes think they will find at the first shot a thing that only comes once in a thousand years?”

“Well,” said Willem, stoutly, “it might just have been the time for one. How were we to know?”

“Outa,” asked little Jan, earnestly, “do you know when it will be red tortoise time again?”

“Aja, baasjes,” said Outa readily, “it won’t be long now. Let Outa think.” He performed a tattoo on the red kopdoek—a sure sign that he was in the thick of mental gymnastics. “What comes just before a thousand, my baasjes?”

“Nine hundred and ninety-nine,” answered Pietie, who was good at arithmetic.

“Now, yes,” said Outa, triumphantly, “I knew it must be nearly time. It is nine hundred and ninety-nine years since there was a red tortoise, so next year this time baasjes can begin to look for one. Only begin, my baasjes, because it will only be creeping out of the egg then. And p’r’aps it won’t be in this veld. It might be far, far away where people don’t know about a red tortoise, and so no one will look for him. Must Outa tell another story about him?”

The sly old man had taken the best way of escaping more questions. The little boys gathered round and listened wide-eyed as he told the story of the Tortoises hunting the Ostriches.

“After Oubaas Giraffe was dead, the Tortoises had a nice life for a long time, and then there came into their veld Old Three Sticks, the Ostrich, with his mam-ma and pap-pa, and his wives, and uncles, and aunties, and children, and friends. Alla! there were a lot of Ostriches! The whole veld was full of them, and they all began eating tortoises wherever they could find them. It was just the same like when Oubaas Giraffe used to go about. And the tortoises thought and thought, and they talked and talked, but they couldn’t make a plan that would drive the Ostriches away.

“The little Red Tortoise was thinking, too, but he didn’t talk till he had his plan ready. Then he called all the Tortoises together. The Old Ones came because they wanted to hear what the wise little Red One had to say, and the Young Ones came because ever since he had killed Oubaas Giraffe they had listened to him. When they were all together he said, ‘It now goes on too long,

this hunting of the Tortoises by Old Three Sticks and his friends. Let us change places and let us, the Tortoise people, go and hunt Ostriches.’

“‘Peep! peep!’ cried all the young Tortoises: they were quite ready. But the Old Ones said, ‘Is this the wise little Red One? How is it possible for us to hunt Ostriches?’

“‘It is possible, because Ostriches never run straight, but always a little in the round, and a little in the round, so that in the end if they run long enough they come again to the place they began from. Now yes, on a certain day let us then go into the veld where the Ostriches like to hunt, and let us make two long rows, not straight out but always in the round; one ring, very large, outside, and the other, smaller, inside. Then when Old Three Sticks and his friends come we will call one to the other and drive them on, and they will flee through the midst of us, round and round and round till they can flee no longer.’

“‘Peep! peep!’ said the young Tortoises, and the Old Ones joined in. They saw that it was a good plan, so they all went to the hunting veld of Old Three Sticks and his friends and spread themselves out, as the little Red Tortoise had said.

“‘Soon the Ostriches came, pecking, pecking, as they walked.

“‘The Tortoises sat very still, waiting, my baasjes, just waiting, till the Ostriches were right in

the middle of the two rings. Then the little Red Tortoise gave the signal, ‘Peep! Peep!’ and at once the calling began.

“‘Are you there?’ called the first Tortoise.

“‘I am here,’ said the next, and so it went on all round the circle, one calling to the other.

“‘What are you doing?’ called the first one.

“‘Hunting Ostriches,’ said the next, and so it went on all round the circle again, one calling to the other.

“‘The Ostriches could see nothing. They could only hear voices calling. They looked at each other and said, ‘What are these voices? It is surely a great army come to hunt us. Let us get away.’

“‘They were very frightened and began to run, and as far as they ran they heard:—

“‘Are you there?’

“‘I am here.’

“‘What are you doing?’

“‘Hunting Ostriches.’

“So it went on, over and over again. The Tortoises never moved, only kept calling out. And the Ostriches ran faster and faster, all in the round, till at last they were so tired they couldn't run any more. First one fell, and then another, and another, and another, till there were heaps of them lying about, and just where they fell they lay quite still. They were too tired to move.

“Then the Tortoises gathered together—they were very many—and they bit Old Three Sticks and all his family and friends on their long necks and killed them.

“Since then the Tortoises have had peace from the Long-necked People—Oubaas Giraffe and old Three Sticks. It is only the Things of the Air, like Crows and Lammervangers, that still hunt them, and baasjes know how they do? They catch a poor Tortoise in their claws and fly away with him, high up over a kopje, and then they drop him on the stones—kabloops!—and there he lies with his shell all broken, and without a shell how can a Tortoise live? And then the Thing of the Air comes and eats him up, and that is the end of the poor Tortoise. But a Red Tortoise they never touch. It is his colour, baasjes, that frightens them. So the Young Tortoises were right

when they said, ‘There is something, after all, in being born a certain colour.’

“After the Ostrich hunt, the little Red Tortoise was sprinkled with buchu under both arms, and his Mam-ma sang him this song:—

The little crook-legged one! I could sprinkle it,

Sprinkle it with buchu under its arms.

The little red crab! The little Wise One!

I sprinkle the buchu under both arms.

For the Long-necks, they that ate us,

It has found a way to kill them;

So we sprinkle it, the little Red One,

Sprinkle the buchu under both arms.”

The usual discussion took place when Outa had finished, and at last Pietie said, “If I had to be a Tortoise, I’d be a red one.”

“Why, my little master?”

“Because the Crows and Lammervangers don’t catch it. To be swallowed by an ostrich or stick in a giraffe’s throat would not be so bad, but I’d hate to be broken on the stones.”

“Ach! my baasje, no matter how Old Friend Death comes, we are never ready for him. When Outa was young he was nearly killed by a troop of springbucks, and he thought, ‘No, not toch trampled to death; to be carried down the river is better.’ But when the flood came and the river carried Outa away, he fought for his life just as hard as when the springbucks were on him. It was the same when the hut was burnt, and when the mad bull chased Outa across the veld. Over and over again the same. Always another sort of death seems better. Always Old Friend Death finds a man not quite ready for him.”

“And now how would you like him to find you, Outa?” asked Willem with much interest.

A whimsical smile spread over the old man's face. "Ach! to hear him! Just sitting in the sun, my baasje, by the skeer-kraal wall, where I have sat for so many, many years. When he comes I will say, 'Morning, Old Friend, you have been a long time on the road—ach! so long, that I am tired of waiting. Let us go at once.' A person needn't pack up for that trek, baasjes. I'll just drop my old sheepskin kaross, and take Old Friend Death's hand and let him show me the way. It is far, my baasjes, far to that land, and no one ever comes back from it. Then someone else will tell the stories by the fire: there will be no Outa any more to talk to the little masters." His voice had dropped to a musing tone.

"Don't! Don't!" cried Pietie in a choked voice.

"Outa, you mustn't say such things," said Willem, and they each seized one of Outa's crooked hands, while little Jan clung to his old coat as though he would never let it go.

"I want my Outa," he cried. "He mustn't go away. I want my Outa Karel!"

The old man's eyes glistened with a moisture not often seen in them. "Still! still! my little baasjes," he said, stroking first one and then another. "Outa doesn't want to make them sad. He is not going yet. He will sit here and tell his foolish stories for many nights yet." A caressing smile broke over his grotesque face. "And do they then want to keep their Outa? Ach! to think of it! The kind little hearts! But what will the Nooi say if the eyes are juicy? No, Outa only said

about the skeer-kraal and sitting in the sun because it sounds so nice and friendly. Look how lively and well Outa is—like a young bull-calf!” He pretended playfully to toss them. “That’s right, my children, now you laugh again. But young bull-calves must also go in the kraal, and the hut is calling Outa. Night, my baasjes, night, night. Sleep well. To-morrow Outa will tell them another beautiful story. Ach, the dear little ones! So good to their ugly Outa!”

Followed by a chorus of “good-nights” from the children; the old man shuffled away, not knowing that he had spoken with prophetic voice, and that Friend Death would find him, even as he wished, sitting in the sun by the skeer-kraal.

But that was not yet awhile, and he told many stories before setting out on the Great Trek for the Unknown Veld whence no traveller returns.